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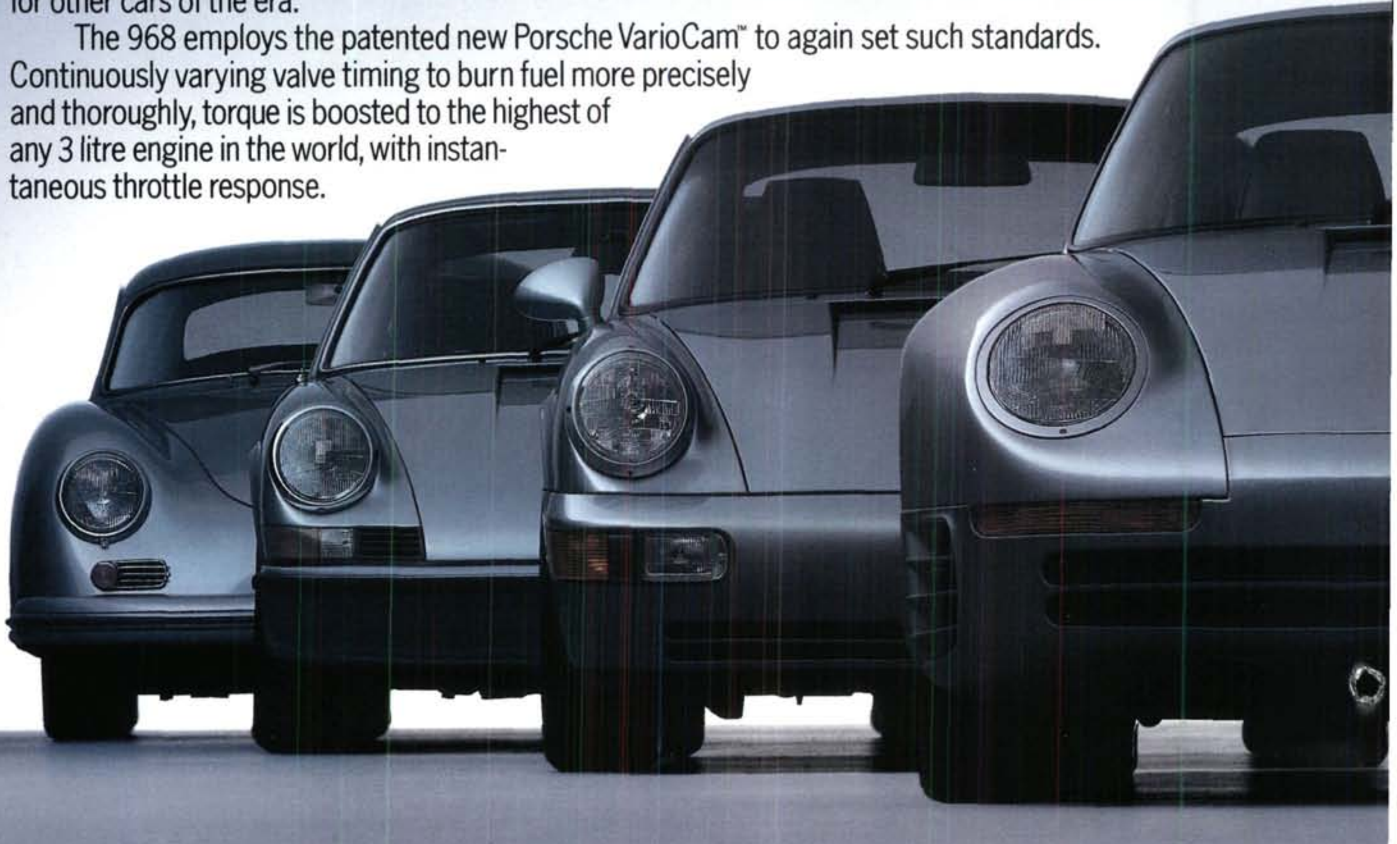

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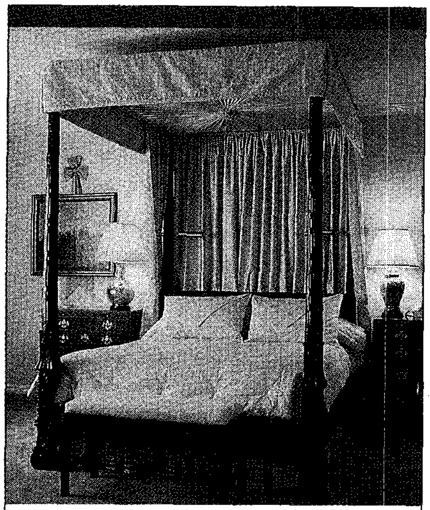

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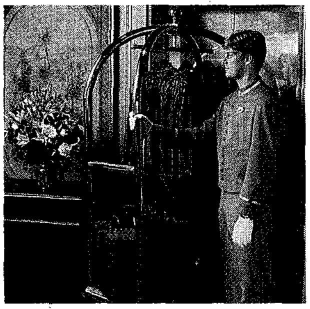

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DRAWINGS: *James Stevenson, Michael Maslin, Robert Mankoff, Bruce Eric Kaplan, George Booth, Mischa Richter, William Hamilton, Jack Ziegler, Charles Barsotti, Arnie Levin, Ronald Searle, Victoria Roberts, Danny Shanahan, Edward Koren, William Steig, Al Ross, Sam Gross, Warren Miller, Richard Cline*

THE NEW YORKER
20 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036
(212) 840-3800

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, vice-president and publisher; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Matthew D. Roberts, vice-president and marketing director; Pamela H. Older, vice-president and director of manufacturing; Martha Kaplan, vice-president. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 1-11 Hay Hill, London W1X7LF, England; Penn Brown & Associates, Inc.: 175 Derby St., No. 36, Hingham, Mass. 02043; Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada M5E 1M2; Carol Orr & Co., Publishers Representative: 3300 Oak Lawn, Suite 500, Dallas, Tx. 75219. Vol. LXVII, No. 51, February 10, 1992. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian goods and services tax registration number R123242885. © 1992 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. THE MAGAZINE'S NAME AND LOGO, AND THE VARIOUS TITLES AND HEADINGS HEREIN ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS, INC., WHICH PUBLISHES THEM THROUGH ITS DIVISION THE NEW YORKER MAGAZINE, INC. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $65.27 (includes G.S.T.). Other foreign, one year, $66.00, payable in advance.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

ONE of the things we like best about life just now is that Richard Nelson's "Two Shakespearean Actors"—which runs only through February 9—offers a chance to see Brian Bedford and Victor Garber doing "duelling Macbeths," in the sequence leading up to the first-act curtain. The conceit is a pair of rival productions of "Macbeth" being staged several blocks away from one another in New York in May, 1849. This device is most effective: it establishes the different approaches to Shakespeare favored by the title characters—the Englishman Macready (Mr. Bedford) and the American Forrest (Mr. Garber); it creates a sweeping narrative line that makes the latter part of the first act seem to flash by; and it's hilariously funny. It also—as someone recently pointed out to us—provides New York audiences with the best "Macbeth" in decades.

During a recent performance of "Two Shakespearean Actors," it occurred to us that the duelling-Macbeths device must be a tricky thing to bring off—particularly the bit where we get both actors doing the same speech but slightly out of synch with each other. The other day, we rang Mr. Bedford to ask him about this, hoping that he would disclose some of the tricks he uses to keep from inadvertently slipping into Forrest's Macbeth. We felt sure that Mr. Bedford would be impressed by our acuity in having zeroed in on this challenging aspect of the production, but all he said was, "Hard? Why should it be hard?" Because they weren't aiming for parody, we explained; it would be easy to make your Macbeth distinctive if you were aiming for parody. He and Mr. Garber were doing something more subtle.

Mr. Bedford *said* he saw what we meant, but we weren't sure. So we rang Mr. Garber. What about him: did he think it was hard? "It isn't so much hard," Mr. Garber told us, "it just takes a lot of focus. It's mostly a question of trying not to do it at exactly the same time. I'm just trying to stay off Brian's rhythm." So it's not style you're thinking of? we asked. "Well, there is that, too," Garber conceded. "There's a sense of keeping the performance—from my perspective—more internalized and sort of at a lower pitch, vocally." Aha! so it *is* hard, we persisted; Mr. Bedford had just been playing it cool. "Oh, no, he doesn't find it hard," Garber laughed. "He's . . ." The actor trailed off. "Cool" didn't even begin to express what Mr. Bedford was: for him, it was all in a night's work.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Ascension Day—The Working Theatre presents a play by Michael Henry Brown about the 1831 slave rebellion led by Nat Turner. Directed by L. Kenneth Richardson. Previews through Feb. 11. Opens Feb. 12 at 8. (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 279-4200.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	3	4	5	6	7	8
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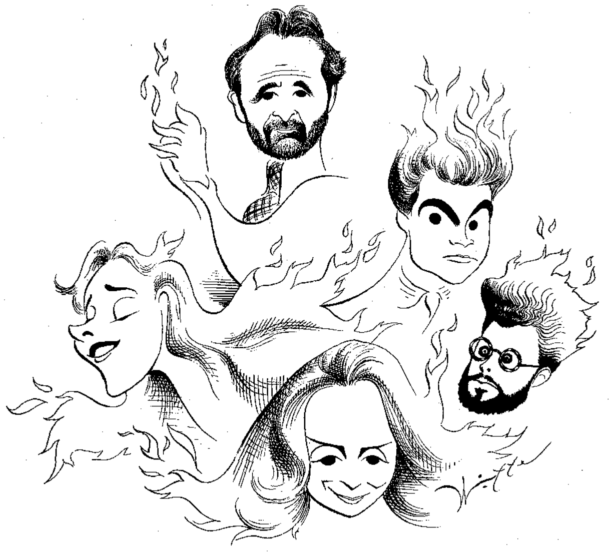
Circle Repertory Company—The third play of the season is **THE BALTIMORE WALTZ**, by Paula Vogel. The cast consists of Cherry Jones, Joe Mantello, and Richard Thompson. Previews through Feb. 9. Opens Feb. 11 at 8. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Crazy for You—A new musical that incorporates nineteen Gershwin songs and has a book by Ken Ludwig. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson lead the cast; Mike Ockrent directed. In previews. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Creditors—Zach Grenier, Caroline Lagerfelt, and Nestor Serrano in August Strindberg's 1889 play. Previews Feb. 3-4. Opens Feb. 5 at 8. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)



Sarah Jessica Parker, Ron Rifkin, Jon Tenney, Patrick Breen, and Maria Tucci in "The Substance of Fire"

Grandchild of Kings—The first installment in Harold Prince's two-part adaptation of the autobiographies of Sean O'Casey. Presented by the Irish Repertory Theatre. In previews. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 477-7900.)

Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother—An adaptation of a novella by Gabriel García Márquez; directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Performed in Spanish; simultaneous-English-translation sets are available. Opens Feb. 4 at 7. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Lady Bracknell's Confinement and **The Party**—A double bill of one-person shows, presented by the Vineyard Theatre. The first is a comedy by Paul Doust that concerns one of the characters from "The Importance of Being Earnest," and the second is Ellen McLaughlin's adaptation of three Virginia Woolf stories. Featuring Edward Hibbert in the former and Kathleen Chalfant in the latter. Previews through Feb. 11. Opens Feb. 12 at 8. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

A Life in the Theatre—F. Murray Abraham and Anthony Fusco in a revival of David Mamet's 1977 play. Previews begin Feb. 8. (Jewish Repertory Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 505-2667.)

Making Book—A comedy by Janet Reed about textbook publishing. With Daniel Ahearn, Catherine Curtin, Claudia Fielding, Allison Janney, and, in a cameo role, Percy Granger. Previews Feb. 4-6. Opens Feb. 7 at 8, and runs through March 1. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-7471.)

The Most Happy Fella—A revival of Frank Loesser's 1956 musical comedy, starring Spiro Malas and Sophie Hayden. Directed by Gerald Gutierrez, the production originated at the Goodspeed Opera House, in East Haddam, Connecticut. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Private Lives—Joan Collins and Simon Jones star in the Noël Coward comedy, which Arvin Brown directed. Previews begin Feb. 11. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Search and Destroy—Griffin Dunne has the lead in this dark comedy by Howard Korder, which had its première at California's South Coast Rep, in 1990. Previews begin Feb. 7. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

The Substance of Fire—Jon Robin Baitz's play, which ran at Playwrights Horizons last spring, moves to Lincoln Center. The cast once again comprises Patrick Breen, Sarah Jessica Parker, Ron Rifkin, Jon Tenney, and Maria Tucci. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

York Theatre Company—Presenting **AFTER THE DANCING IN JERICHO**, a new comedy by P. J. Barry, which is about two high-school friends reunited after thirty-five years. Opens Feb. 7 at 8, and runs through Feb. 23. (York, 2 E. 90th St. 534-5366.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Beau Jest—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Bella, Belle of Byelorussia—A comedy by Jeffrey Essmann, with songs by Michael John LaChiusa. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Feb. 9.)

Boesman & Lena—Athol Fugard has directed this revival of his 1969 play. Keith David, Tsepo Mokone, and Lynne Thigpen make up the cast. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Catskills on Broadway—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/23/91.) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Chess—Tim Rice has revised the book and lyrics for this revival of the musical, which has a score by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus. (Master, Riverside Dr. at 103rd St. 663-8893. Closes Feb. 23.)

Cinderella—The Riverside Shakespeare Company presents an English pantomime version of the fairy tale. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

The Comedy of Errors—A production of Shakespeare's comedy, presented by Theatre for a New Audience. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Dancing at Lughnasa—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Down the Flats—A play by Tony Kavanagh, which is set in Dublin. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

Finkel's Follies—A show billed as "a new American musical vaudeville," conceived by and starring Fyvush Finkel. (Westside, 450 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

From the Mississippi Delta—In eleven scenes, Endesha Ida Mae Holland dramatizes her own rise (and journey) from the Delta (where she had been a teen-age prostitute) to the University of Minnesota and triumph in academia. The leading character, though, is her mother, a midwife called Aint Baby, who is very well portrayed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce. The role of the author is split between Ms. Bruce, Sybil Walker, and Jacqueline Williams, and the result is a lively and merry evening. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

The Home Show Pieces—Four short plays written and directed by, and featuring (in three of the four works), David Greenspan. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Feb. 16.)

I Won't Dance: Steve Ross Sings Fred Astaire—Mr. Ross in an "all-singing, all-playing, non-dancing" tribute. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call 688-7253.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: Bertolt Brecht's **GALILEO**, in a translation by Charles Laughton and Friedrich Schiller's **MARY STUART**, in a translation by Robert David MacDonald (starting Feb. 7). (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Julie Halston's Lifetime of Comedy—A one-woman show. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Lips Together, Teeth Apart—Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Hillary Bailey Smith, Jonathan Hadary, Roxanne Hart, and Anthony Heald; directed by John Tillinger. (7/8/91) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

A Little Hotel on the Side—The National Actors Theatre's production of the 1894 farce by Georges Feydeau and Maurice Desvallières. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering young man. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist, David Petrarca the director. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 23.)

Park Your Car in Harvard Yard—Jason Robards, white-bearded and padded to portliness, plays a retired teacher, and Judith Ivey is a former student who gets a job as his housekeeper, in Israel Horovitz's very funny, touching play, which is set in Gloucester, Massachusetts, over a year's time. Under Zoe Caldwell's expert direction, the performances are as near to perfection as makes no matter. (11/18/91) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Return to the Forbidden Planet—Gabriel Barré, Julee Cruise, Robert McCormick, and Louis Tucci are all appealing in this light-minded entertainment, a London import that won the Laurence Olivier Award for best musical in a year when it might have gone to "Miss Saigon" (whose producer's subsequent indignation led to the creation of a new award category). The show—a patchwork of beloved pop songs stitched together with Shakespeareana—has almost nothing to do with the cult movie it is based on, and still less to do with "The Tempest." Written and directed by Bob Carlton, it is more than anything else an occasion to laugh a bit and rock out a lot. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Sight Unseen—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. (2/3/92) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Two Shakespearean Actors—Richard Nelson's new play (it's sort of comical-historical-tragical) rewards you with the kind of theatrical high you don't usually associate with Broadway. It's difficult to decide, though, whether to give most of the credit to Mr. Nelson (who's written a wonderful play), to Brian Bedford and Victor Garber (who play the two nineteenth-century rivals of the title), to Jack O'Brien (for his direction of the huge and mostly excellent ensemble), or even to the Cort itself, that jewel of a theatre any visit to which is a little like a journey back in time. (1/27/92) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 9.)

Tubes—A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

The Visit—Jane Alexander and Harris Yulin in the Roundabout's revival of a play by Friedrich Dürrenmatt (as adapted by Maurice Valency). (2/3/92) (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

A Woman Without a Name—The Signature Theatre Company's production of a drama by Romulus Linney, adapted from his novel "Slowly by Thy Hand Unfurled." (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 262-1647. Closes Feb. 16.)

LONG RUNS

AND THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND: THE KANDER & EBB MUSICAL: A musical revue, with Karen Ziémba, Joel Blum, Terry Burrell, Marcus Lovett, and Marin Mazzie. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.) . . . **BREAKING LEGS:** The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Karen Valentine, Ronald Maccone, and Nick Wyman. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turns thirty-two in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.) . . . **LOST IN YONKERS:** There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **PAGEANT:** A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.) . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE SECRET GARDEN:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **SONG OF SINGAPORE:** A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.) . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

WE recently came across a press release from the New-York Historical Society for a series of lectures and concerts on the subject of "What Is American?," to be held at the society between March and June. Of the seventeen programs scheduled, not one takes up the art of dancing. What a missed opportunity! Tap dancing, modern dancing, jazz dancing, the films of Fred Astaire, the mature career of George Balanchine—perhaps the real question in twentieth-century dance is, What is *not* American? Why, an entire evening could be devoted to the use of various dance forms in what are probably the most influential films ever made: the cartoons of Walt Disney. In the older Disney works, especially, the dances gave the characters a body language that seemed to sum up the American spirit: ballet and jazz, elegance and vulgarity, seriousness and silliness. The animation of dancers was based on meticulous studies from life: you feel the looseness of Pinocchio's joints and sense the effort that it takes for the hippos in "Fantasia" to defy gravity. But the most astonishing element is the dances themselves: old Disney characters perform actual choreography, with linked steps and gestures that are related to their musical accompaniment in clear and varied ways. The dances have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Every other studio—beginning with Warner Brothers—cheated, somehow; the feeling of gravity in a moving body would be missing, or the characters would merely drift around to the music, performing no discernible steps. Disney alone kept the dances real.

As for the new Disney—the studio of "The Little Mermaid" and "Beauty and the Beast"—the jury is still out, dancewise. As an escort for a child of elementary-school age, we have had the chance to study "Beauty and the Beast" three times in the theatre and "The Little Mermaid" about a thousand times on videocassette. While we sing right along with both movies, we must confess a keen disappointment that when Ariel, the mermaid, trades her voice for legs there isn't a single dance to dramatize the wonder of the exchange. The most eye-catching moments in the movies are produced through a Busby Berkeley-esque play of weightless images. Berkeley is a Warner Brothers reference; perhaps the new Disney is really the triumph of the old Warners. Still, both are as American as apple pie.

New York City Ballet—Feb. 4 at 8: "Interplay," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Glass Pieces." . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 8: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "The Cage," "Duo Concertant," and "Dances at a Gathering." . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 8: "The Goldberg Variations" and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: "Monumentum Pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," "Duo Concertant," "Delight of the Muses," and "Prague Symphony." . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 2: "Mozart Serenade," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze,'" and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 8: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "Behind the

DANCE–Cont'd

China Dogs," and "Symphony in Three Movements."... ¶ Feb. 9 at 1: "Divertimento No. 15," "The Cage," "Seven by Five plus Two," and "Symphony in Three Movements."... ¶ Feb. 9 at 7: "Mozartiana," "Behind the China Dogs," and "Stars and Stripes."... ¶ Feb. 11 at 8: "Mother Goose," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Stars and Stripes."... ¶ Feb. 12 at 8: "Apollo," "The Cage," "Seven by Five plus Two," and "La Valse." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 23.)

Twyla Tharp and Dancers—Final performances of the engagement. Feb. 4 at 8 and Feb. 8 at 2: "Ocean's Motion," "Little Ballet," "Grand Pas: Rhythm of the Saints," and "Nine Sinatra Songs."... ¶ Feb. 5-6 at 8 and Feb. 9 at 3: "Deuce Coupe," "Octet," and "Nine Sinatra Songs."... ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: "Sextet," "Men's Piece," and "Golden Section" from "The Catherine Wheel."... ¶ Feb. 8 at 8: "Nine Sinatra Songs," "Men's Piece," and "Ocean's Motion." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance—Final performances of the engagement. Feb. 4-5 and Feb. 7 at 8, and Feb. 9 at 2: "Pond," "Aperitif," "Intrados," and "Where Phantoms Gather" (New York première).... ¶ Feb. 6 and Feb. 8 at 8: Group dance from "Sanctum," "Blue Streak," "Dramatis Personae," "A Fine Line," and "Mechanical Organ."... ¶ Feb. 9 at 7:30: "Temple," sextet from "Graph," "Index," "Aurora," and "Bach II." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Fred Darsow—In "Fandangos," a program of new and repertory works. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 6-8 at 8 and Feb. 9 at 3.)

Rod Rodgers Dance Company—Presenting, in honor of Black History Month, "The Legacy," "Rhythmdances," and excerpts from "Poets & Peacemakers." (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Feb. 7-8 at 7:30.)

Erick Hawkins Dance Company—In a one-week engagement that runs through Feb. 16. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 11 at 7:30 and Feb. 12 at 8.)

A Bob Marley tribute at Sounds of Brazil

NIGHT LIFE

Delta 88 and the Cat Club are gone. Whether or not they were trampled under the feet of the recession remains somewhat unclear. We've heard the not entirely convincing story that Delta 88's owner closed the club because she wanted to concentrate her efforts on a new incarnation of Caroline's Comedy Club. We've heard several tangled rumors about the financial machinations of the Cat Club's impresario, none of which we feel comfortable repeating without a lawyer present.

What's important, of course, is that the clubs have closed their doors. We always had a soft spot in our heart for Delta 88. It was bright and tacky and loud. It boasted sunny gospel brunches, fat stacks of napkins, glasses of water big enough to put out brush fires, and a chicken-fried-steak dish that ranks high on our list of the greatest night-club entrées of all time. (To those who suggest that the Cottonwood Café's chicken-fried steak is just as good, we say, Oh, *please*.)

The Cat Club was a barren, black, pillared room. Once, a headbanger friend of ours went there and came back disappointed because nobody had beaten him up. The Cat Club was not exactly the sort of place one would have a soft spot for, but we regret its passing nonetheless. Watching the genteel New York Swing Dance Society take over the club every Sunday night was one of the most surreal experiences in town.

There is some good news in all this: Caroline's is about to open on Broadway and 49th Street, and the Swing Dance Society has relocated to the Village Gate. What's more, a new club may soon open at the old Cat Club site. How long it will be there is another question.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**DAVID STALLER** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Mr. Staller's subjects here are "Noël and Cole," as in Coward and Porter. The late show on Fridays and Saturdays is "Americans Abroad," an assemblage of material by American composers living in London. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Thirty-year-olds in love call Mabel Godwin "a *scandal*." Now in her seventies, she remains a singer of racy jazz numbers, a devout chatterer, a wearer of gold lamé suits, and a pianist who perks along quite nicely to the accompaniment of a snare drum and a standup bass. Ms. Godwin performs Fridays and Saturdays from nine-thirty. On Sundays, cornettist Lee Lorenz leads the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band, on Mondays the Grove Street Stompers do their Dixieland thing, and Tuesdays through Thursdays belong to Al Bundy. Arthur's is currently decorated for the holidays—Christmas, New Year's, Halloween, and St. Patrick's Day.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. The Ballroom is in a Brazilian groove for the next few weeks. **ROSA MARIA** claims Feb. 4-8, and jazz singer **LENY ANDRADE,** whose stardom dates from the bossa-nova craze of the nineteen-fifties, begins work on Feb. 11. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy, two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. Music from nine. Dining.

Bitter End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—The free passes to this club could pave most of Greenwich Village—and they often do. The Bitter End was all abuzz in the seventies, when it was a stopping point for the sort of singers whose records you can now order from television: Gordon Lightfoot, Melissa Manchester, Neil Sedaka.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. Timbales master **TITO PUENTE** is on hand Feb. 4-9, with an all-star lineup called the **GOLDEN LATIN JAZZ ALL-STARS.** Puente is one of the most prominent figures in Latin jazz. He's been leading bands since the forties, has written several standards (including the Santana hit "Oye Como Va"), and has played on nearly a hundred records. He's also a natural cutup, who spikes his solos with a repertoire of comic gestures—swaying his hips like Ralph Kramden doing the mambo, brushing his hair with a drumstick. **DIANNE REEVES** begins an engagement on Feb. 11. First set at nine. Dining.

Blue Willow, 644 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (673-6480)—This room is oddly Victorian for lower Broadway, a region almost exclusively devoted to the celebration of youth culture. You won't find any funky murals or drinks with funny names here, just marble walls, antique furnishings, and a ceiling that would be hard to hit with a baseball. It's an agreeable place for conversation, which is probably why the small jazz combos that set up here nightly often get relegated to being background music. Music from seven-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

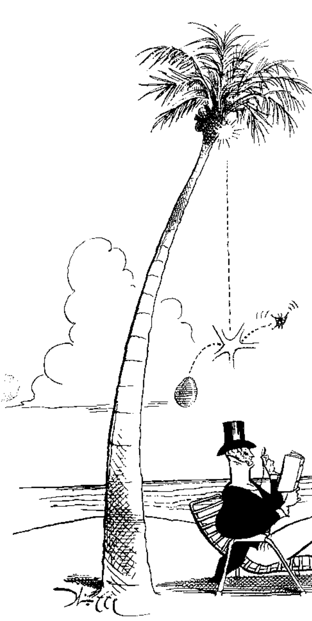
Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Next door, there's a bustling, garishly lit market. Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, however, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. Larger ensembles are currently holding forth: from Feb. 3 through Feb. 9, the quartet of saxophonist **VINCENT HERRING,** pianist **KEVIN HAYS,** bassist **DWAYNE BURNO,** and drummer **CARL ALLEN**; and, beginning on Feb. 10, the trio of trumpeter **MARCUS BELGRAVE,** pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY,** and bassist **CECIL MC BEE.** Music from ten. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and the **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET.** The quartet, which has been doing its fastidious swinging for more than thirty years and which has over four hundred pieces in its repertoire, tends to play in big halls these days, so its occasional layovers in this intimate space are to be treasured. Sets at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.... ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—Jazz clubs aren't always known for their romantic atmosphere, but Condon's earns higher marks than most. It's a low-ceilinged basement establishment, with lemon walls and abundant candlelight. Pianist **DON PULLEN'S AFRICAN-BRAZILIAN CONNECTION** plays here Feb. 4-9, and the **JIMMY WITHERSPOON** trio begins a week-long gig on Feb. 11. Music after nine-thirty.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment center. The cheery white downstairs bar has French windows giving on to the bustle of Seventh Avenue, but the real clamor is indoors. Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. Pop standards are sung/shouted, usually with altered, risqué lyrics; wisecracks are fired across the room; and everyone laughs too hard. Upstairs there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—The seating arrangements in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement make flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. **NEW YORK VOICES,** five singers backed by a trio, have the stage Feb. 4-9. Jazz-blues singer and songwriter **MOSE ALLISON** heads up a trio the week beginning Feb. 11. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.



J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side jazz room, one steep flight up from the hurly-burly. On Feb. 5 you can catch **SAM PILAFIAN,** a jazz tuba player who also leads a "legit" life as a member of the Empire Brass. Pianist Mark Shane and guitarist Frank Vignola (a Django disciple) back him up in jazz classics by Ellington, Fats Waller, and others, many of which appear on his recent recording, "Travelin' Light." Music from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Judys', 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—An intimate, burgundy-walled *boîte* attached to the Iroquois Hotel. In the front room, which is decorated with photos of famous Judys—and of the famous daughter of a famous Judy—a pianist keeps the happy-hour barbirds occupied. In the dining room, vocalists work out at nine Mondays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is an airy, good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. Pianist **STEVE KUHN** and bassist **STEVE LA SPINA** work out together Feb. 5-8. Music from nine-forty-five.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **ROBIN HOLCOMB,** who'll be here Feb. 6-7, released her first major-label work a year or so back, a stark, enigmatic record full of rural-American themes. Also this week: **AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS** sings from the Bessie Smith songbook on Feb. 8, and **JOE MORRIS'S SWEATSHOP** holds sway on Feb. 9. Music after nine.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but perhaps a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. But the club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too. **JR. WELLS** comes in on Feb. 5, and the fine country singer-songwriter **JOE ELY** plays a solo acoustic show on Feb. 8. Music after nine. Dining.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **ALEX CHILTON,** the Memphis-based singer-songwriter, makes one of his rare visits on Feb. 7. Chilton, formerly of the legendary group Big Star, seems to grow more sardonic every time we see him. The last time he performed in New York he played even more than his usual number of tongue-in-cheek lounge standards, and his bass player walked offstage in a huff when Chilton, for an encore, began playing what we think might have been a Foghat cover. The **FLESHTONES** appear on Feb. 8. Shows at ten on Thursdays, and at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. Jazz organist Bill Doggett leads a five-piece group through Feb. 9; and Ellen Greene begins a three-week run on Feb. 11. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays.

L'Omnibus de Maxim's, 680 Madison Ave., at 61st St. (980-6988)—A don't-clap-just-rattle-your-jewelry kind of place, where patrons eat pasta from deep dishes and, occasionally, dip French fries into silver gravy boats filled with ketchup. Singer/wacky guy **MARK NADLER** is the current attraction here. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays beginning at nine.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—**ROSEMARY CLOONEY,** who can often be found here at this time of year, begins a monthlong engagement on Feb. 4. Clooney has had two lives in show biz: the first peaked in the early fifties, with a string of hit recordings and a starring role in "White Christmas"; the second began in the late seventies, when she signed with the Concord label. She has since made a slew of records with Concord, half of which are tribute albums, devoted to the likes of Harold Arlen, Cole Porter, and, recently, Rodgers, Hart, and Hammerstein. Onstage, Ms. Clooney takes a natural and understated approach: she has a warm, husky but clear voice, a world-weary cheerfulness, and a disarming sense of humor that bubbles up everywhere. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. On Feb. 12 you can catch George Gee's Orchestra as well as Jack Twomey's big band. Show times vary.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This decaying theatre was once the famous Studio 54, where the late Steve Rubell's henchmen helped popularize the policy of turning away the unbeautiful. Now it's the home of one of the city's biggest, oldest, and loudest rock clubs, which was formerly housed in a decaying ballroom in the East Village. The **PIXIES** are here on Feb. 5. The band's fourth album, "Trompe le Monde," has pushed them a few steps closer to stardom, but we can't hold that against them. Their music—a combination of punk, surf, and noise that's greater than the sum of its parts—is as fierce, uncompromising, and weird as ever. **ROBYN HITCHCOCK** and **MATTHEW SWEET** share a bill on Feb. 7. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "Manhattan" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to score. **SYLVIA SYMS** performs on Feb. 9. Shows Sundays at eight and, upon demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" You probably don't get the day off, but Feb. 6 is Bob Marley Day, and in celebration this club is presenting the Jamaican reggae group **ISRAEL VIBRATION.** Roger Steffens will also be on hand to screen some film and video footage of Marley. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. A trio consisting of **CEDAR WALTON, RON CARTER,** and **BILLY HIGGINS** will be here for a couple of weeks as of Feb. 4. They will record a live album during their stay. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The café's subterranean jazz haunt sports embarrassingly cheesy renderings of full-figured gals—the kind of artwork usually reserved for pinball machines. Otherwise, it's an airy, convivial place with comfy, diner-style booths, IKEA-style tables and chairs, and jazz musicians. Every Wednesday the club hosts the Mingus Big Band, a fifteen-piece ensemble (including a number of names you're likely to recognize) that specializes in arrangements in the style of the late, great bassist Charles Mingus. Sets at nine and eleven.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Thanks to low lighting, muralled pillars, ironwork, and a beautifully restored old tin ceiling, this loft space manages to feel homey. The sound system can be overwhelming, but the place is big enough to accommodate both those who want to lose their hearing and those who don't. The Bob and Ray of rockabilly, **ROBERT GORDON** (with his band) and **CHRIS SPEDDING,** are in action Feb. 7-8. Gordon, who looks every inch the fifties rocker, from his pompadour to his pointy shoes, has a resonant baritone that's just right for songs like "Black Slacks" and Elvis's "Love Me." But Spedding's guitar playing transcends the genre, making the duo's shows much more than just an exercise in musical CPR. The Belmont Playboys, a North Carolina rockabilly outfit, round out the bill. **ALEX CHILTON'S** band performs on Feb. 10. Sets at eight and eleven weeknights, eight-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room—which, with its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a live-in Nevelson sculpture—the New York Swing Dance Society is currently holding its lively get-togethers, with the Kit McClure big band providing the music on Feb. 9, from eight until midnight.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." Pianist **DOROTHY DONEGAN** plays in a trio here Feb. 4-9, and the **JOE LOVANO** quartet, featuring **MICHEL PETRUCCIANI,** starts work on Feb. 11. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Ice Capades—Skating stars and lavish sets. (Nassau Coliseum. Feb. 4-9. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-516 794-9300.)

Walt Disney's World on Ice—Featuring Peter Pan. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 51st St. Feb. 7-16. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

Reno—Working out new material. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. Feb. 4 and Feb. 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the nights of the performances.)

"The Monkey King"—A Chinese opera performed by the New Generation Drama Association of Taiwan. (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. 373-1850. Feb. 6 and Feb. 8 at 7:30, and Feb. 9 at 2.)

Meredith Monk—With Robert Een in a new work, "Facing North." Presented by the Danspace Project. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 529-2318. Feb. 6-9 at 8:30. Through Feb. 16.)

"Roy Cohn/Jack Smith"—Ron Vawter portrays two activists: one who's for gay rights and another who's against them. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Feb. 7-9 at 8.)

"Spew"—A musical confessional journey, with drag queens. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Feb. 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the performance.)

P.S. 122—Three nights of benefit performances. Feb. 6 at 8: Eric Bogosian, Spalding Gray, Bill Irwin, Lenny Pickett, and others. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: Ann Carlson, Quentin Crisp, Jeannie Hutchins, Dancenoise, and others. . . . At 11: Mimi Goese, Blue Man Group, Everett Quinton, and others. . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 8: David Cale, Jane Comfort, Ishmael Houston-Jones, John Kelly, Deb Margolin, and others. . . . At 11: Richard Elovich, Jennifer Miller, Mabou Mines, Paul Zaloom, and others. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

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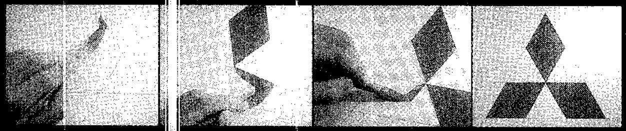

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ART

WHAT, you may ask yourself, could be more pitiful than the sight of a dead kitty's belongings—litter tray, feeding bowls, ratty blankie, and mousy ball, all neatly set out but to no avail? Well, the answer is, "plenty." These and other feline mementos, such as framed condolence notes from veterinary groups, are the work of Mike Kelley, the monarch of mange, but they face some stiff competition from the artist's colleagues in "Just Pathetic," a show curated by Ralph Rugoff (American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster Street; through February 29), which first appeared last summer, in Los Angeles, at the Rosamund Felsen gallery. Jeffrey Vallance is another outstanding contributor. The L.A. version of the show featured his "Temptation," a small painting sent to and returned by the Vatican, displayed with its rejection letter. More droll, perhaps, if no less pathetic, is Vallance's "Run Over Art Shipment," a damaged cardboard container, with tire-tread marks, accompanied by a correspondence between appraisers and insurers. Then, beyond droll, comes "My F.B.I. File," an enlarged photostat of a document describing the occasion when this California artist, evidently stoned and in a roadside ditch, was picked up by local police and was "noted to be babbling and sporadically attempting to abuse himself."

These are some of the low points (i.e., high points) of a profoundly hip bit of entertainment that also includes some sensationally hapless pieces by Chris Burden, Jessica Diamond, Georg Herold, John Miller, Cady Noland, Raymond Pettibon, and William Wegman. The meek have for the moment inherited the art world, if nothing else, and this show is a winning manifesto. But, as Rugoff writes in his role of good-shepherd-to-the-blind, "We live in a culture which privileges sight," and it is our most humble wish that in the uncertain future shepherds and sheep alike refrain from the kingly use of "privilege" as a verb.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Barbizon, in the Forest of Fontainebleau, was a meeting place and inspiration for several French landscape painters in the eighteen-fifties and sixties. A large sampling of works by Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, and others is on view. Through May 10. . . . ¶ "The Royal Art of Benin," a selection of nearly a hundred and fifty brass, ivory, terra-cotta, and wood sculptures—busts of kings, sceptres of office, side-blow horns, and other regalia—from the kingdom that flourished (from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth) in what is now southern Nigeria. . . . ¶ "American Rococo, 1750-75." Furniture, silver, paintings, engravings, ceramics, and glass made in pre-Revolutionary America. . . . ¶ The exhibition of East Asian lacquer from the collection of Florence and Herbert Irving may be the most impeccably installed show of the year. The slaty shades of gray on the walls and the pin-spot lights positioned above the vitrines brilliantly set off the already vivid array of red and black boxes, lap desks, *sake* bottles, and such, some of which are inlaid with pearly abalone and gold. There is no fuss here, just punch. Through Feb. 23. . . . ¶ A group of Alpine landscape sketches and local genre scenes by John Singer Sargent, made during a youthful jaunt through the Bernese Oberland, in 1870. Through March 22. . . . ¶ A retrospective of the works of Stuart Davis (1892-1964), including a hundred and seventy-five paintings, murals, watercolors, and drawings. Through Feb. 16. . . . ¶ The redesigned and renovated Arms and Armor galleries are open, and jammed to the hilt. The central Equestrian Court is still here, regally appointed, and it is now surrounded by eight new displays of Japanese, European, Islamic, and American weaponry and armor. . . . ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." The Eilenberg collection, from which this show has been selected, is not particularly comprehensive nor focussed on grand masterpieces, but it does sparkle in many unexpected ways. For instance, it includes a group of bronze sculptures from Indonesia that many consider to be the finest privately assembled collection of such material in the world. . . . ¶ Three new permanent galleries are home to more than four hundred nineteenth-century European sculptures and decorative objects. . . . ¶ Candelabras, snuff boxes, and hotel façades are just some of the subject matters depicted in a show of eighteenth-century French drawings. Through March 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

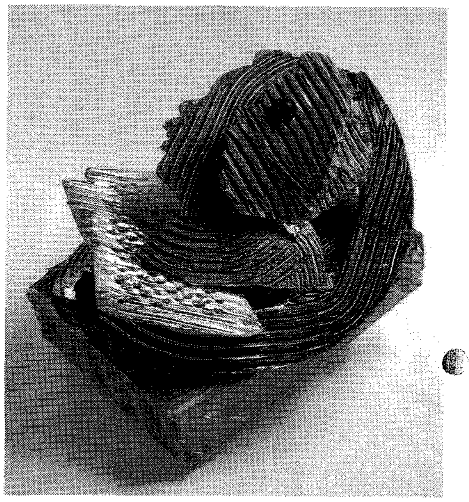
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Works by Cézanne, Derain, Matisse, Picasso, and others from the collection of William S. Paley, who was chairman emeritus of the museum at the time of his death, in 1990. Through April 7. . . . ¶ A small show of recent photographs by Gay Block, of people who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Through April 7. . . . ¶ Twenty-one lamps from the sixties and seventies, including a Noguchi "Akari" lamp and a Castiglioni "Taraxacum" lamp. Alas, no lava is in sight. . . . ¶ On display on the ground floor are "Cross Check," "Power Play," "High Sticking," and "Hat Trick," four new chairs by the hockey-loving Frank Gehry. Through March 23. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until late spring.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of the works of William Wegman, which includes nearly two hundred paintings, drawings, photographs, and videotapes. Through April 19. (For more on Wegman, see Galleries–57th Street Area.). . . ¶ Seventy multimedia works, from 1971 to the present, by Alexis Smith. Through March 1. . . . ¶ "Variations on Themes," a show of serial works in various graphic mediums, by, among others, Terry Winters, Dennis Adams, Kiki Smith, Donald Judd, and Jasper Johns. Through March 15. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Whitney Museum at Philip Morris, Park Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Loophole of Retreat," a very affecting installation work by Ellen Driscoll, was inspired by the autobiography of Harriet Jacobs, a former slave who spent seven years living in secrecy in the eaves of her grandmother's shed. Jacobs bored a peephole in a wall and through it watched her children at play in a dirt circle, presumably without their knowing her whereabouts. The central part of the installation is a conical structure made of rickety old boards and resting on its side, with a door at the wide end. Suspended above and slowly circling the cone is a wheel of objects that you can glimpse via a camera obscura once you've entered the cone. These small sculptures, made of discarded, aged materials, are sparkling, toylike worlds, but they also make reference to domestic service, flight, and lynchings. The fact that these magical and horrific sculpted memories are themselves ephemeral, captured as vague images of light, makes the whole experience that much more complex and stirring. Through Feb. 8. (Open daily, except Sundays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The New Merengue," an installation in the Grand Lobby, by sculptor Houston Conwill, poet Estella Conwill Majozo, and architect Joseph De Pace. Through May 3. . . . ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)



Self-portrait by Sam Gilliam (American Craft Museum)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—Three site-specific installations inhabit the museum these days: Sam Gilliam's "Windows Go Orange (e.e. cummings)"; Robert Kushner's "Daffodils"; and Dale Chihuly's "Niijima Floats." (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Motifs and Meanings in Asian Art," a selection of sixty Korean, Chinese, and Japanese works from the Rockefeller collection. Through March 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"The Treasures of the Last Emperor," fifty-four objects from the years of young Puyi's residence in the palace (1908-24). Among the highlights are a set of scholar's writing instruments, a toy train, several embroidered satin garments, and five packs of imported cigarettes. On loan from the Palace Museum, in Beijing. Through March 7. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 7.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—Joseph Beuys' early-seventies aluminum-glass-and-photo assemblage titled "Arena (where I would have got if I had been intelligent)." . . ¶ Six large paintings are the centerpiece of Brice Marden's show of works inspired by the Tang-dynasty poet Cold Mountain. Through May 31. . . . ¶ For those unfamiliar with the Conceptual and graphic work of Lawrence Weiner, this exhibition, titled "Displacement," is a good primer. While the artist is known for creating exquisite artistic moments in the sparest situations, the current show is sort of the inverse. The wittiest piece, expressing a double-edged ambivalence, is on the Center's bathroom doors, which are labelled "Us" and "Them." Through April 30. . . . ¶ On the roof, Dan Graham has created a fine urban park with glass walls, a floor of spongy asphalt tiles, and a squat glass cylinder at its center. The park is elevated above the roof as if it were afloat, and it is very pleasant to spend time up there, especially in the nearby coffee bar/video lounge. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"The Sigmund Freud Antiquities." Close to a hundred of the two thousand Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Chinese objects the psychoanalyst collected. Even the ordinary pieces are full of interest, if only because Freud once owned them; for example, there's the small steatite portrait of Amenophis I and his mother, Ahmose-Nofretiri, Egyptian rulers who, in the ultimate resolution of the Oedipus complex, were buried together. The best part of the show is a series of black-and-white photographs—taken in 1938, by Edmund Engelman—of Freud's study and examining room shortly before he fled Vienna for London. Although they are ordinary pictures, they reveal just how Freud lived with his powerful assembly of statues: we find them jammed together in cases, perched atop various pieces of furniture, and lined up at the edge of his desk like an army of history's most exalted foot soldiers. Through

Feb. 18. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—Seventeenth-century Dutch drawings—of the landscape, genre, and figure variety—by Rembrandt, Ruisdael, Goltzius, and many others. Through April 26. . . . ¶ A small show of printed books and bindings produced in seventeenth-century Flanders and Holland. Through April 26. . . . ¶ Selections on view from the library's permanent collection include one of its three Gutenberg Bibles, Stevenson's autograph manuscript of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and the original scores of symphonies by Brahms and Mahler. Through April 26. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—A group of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century *santos*—carved-wood holy objects made by family artisans in Puerto Rico. (Open daily, 11:30 to 7:30.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Hallowed Haunts," a show of seventy-three drawings and watercolors by Charles Addams (1912-88), most of which first appeared in the pages of this magazine. Through March 8. . . . ¶ An exhibition of paintings, drawings, manuscripts, and published works by Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872), the founder of the National Academy. Through March 12. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"1+1=1," a series of recent projects by Alfredo Jaar, primarily in the form of large-scale light-box installations. Through April 19. . . . ¶ "The Big Nothing or Le Presque Rien," a group exhibition in which each artist has been asked to contemplate the notions of emptiness and materiality. Through April 19. (Part of the show runs at the French Embassy, 972 Fifth Ave., at 78th St. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays. Through Feb. 28.). . . ¶ Jeffry Mitchell's installation, titled "My Spirit," consists of rubber, plaster, and latex tableaux of cartoon figures, toy creatures, and other kitschy icons. Through April 19. . . . ¶ In the "don't make me ovah" department: walk by the museum's Broadway window and you may see a museum patron's face age twenty-five years in thirty seconds. It's "The Age Machine" that's doing it, through digital technology. Through April 19. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Recently acquired photographs are on display, including Morris Engel's panoramic views of New York City and Desiré Charnay's eighteen-fifties albumen prints of Mexico City. Through May 2. (Third Floor Gallery.). . . ¶ A large selection of manuscripts, letters, photographs, and other objects that shed light on the life of Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950). Through Feb. 29. (Berg Collection.). . . ¶ Merlin, Mordred, Gawain, and Galahad leap off the pages and prints of "King Arthur: Looking at the Legend." Through Feb. 22. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—Ik-Joong Kang's "3 x 3," an installation that consists of thousands of three-inch-square paintings and collages. Through April 1. . . . ¶ "Art Beyond Sight," an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by visually impaired artists; museumgoers are permitted to touch the sculptures. Through March 29. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Thirty paintings and sculptures by this year's artists-in-residence: Ada Pilar Cruz, Leonardo Drew, and Eve Sandler. Through March . . . . ¶ "Africa and the Diaspora" has nearly a hundred works from the museum's collection, dating from the fifth century to the present. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Per Kirkeby—The artistic identity of this accomplished Danish painter has been obscured somewhat by the Neo-Expressionist label that has been attached to him. While he paints with a gestural hand, his work is much more contained than that of, say, Baselitz or Penck. Although the eleven essentially abstract paintings here are infused with reminders of Chinese landscapes, and although they often conjure up a slightly agitated Matisse, these rocky, cloudy, watery weatherscapes could more appropriately be considered homages to Kandinsky. Through Feb. 29. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Bill Traylor (1854-1947)—This self-taught artist, a former slave, did not start drawing until he was in his eighties. Although he made art for only a few years, there is an extraordinary resolution to his style. The single-figure portraits of people and animals, most of them in profile, are as primally sophisticated as cave paintings. While the work is quite charming, it undeniably has a dark side, characterized by such things as a ferocious being with the body of a wolf and the haunting face of a rabid man. Through Feb. 8. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—jasper johns, Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through March 14); **gaston lachaise,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 22); **john newman,** Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (through March 7); **robert rauschenberg,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Feb. 29); **man ray** and **meret oppenheim,** Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through March 27); **frederick j. sykes,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through Feb. 22).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

William Wegman—Go big or stay home. Three exhibitions this winter are dedicated to exploring the broad range of Wegman's work. The retrospective at the Whitney Museum (organized by the Kunstsmuseum Lucerne) is the most extensive ever for the artist, and will be up for three months. On the gallery front, Holly Solomon (724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.; open Mondays, through Feb. 15) has new paintings and Polaroids. And Pace-MacGill (32 E. 57th St.; through Feb. 22) is showing black-and-white photographs taken in the seventies.

Short List—ronald bladen and **elaine de kooning,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 15); **gregory gillespie,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through March 7); **elizabeth newman,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 15); **giuseppe penone,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 29); **helen miranda wilson,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 7).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Susan Hiller—Hand-painted color photographs, along with altered and rephotographed postcards, by an American-born Conceptualist based in England. The laconic Hiller sticks to her themes: middle-class living rooms and, especially, odd weather conditions along the English coast. Above a bureau in each identical interior the artist has brushed in a different "painting" in an instantly recognizable style, such as "Fauvist." The old-fashioned postcards depict seemingly extreme events, such as giant "dog waves" hurling themselves at genteel homes. Subtle stuff, with a queer English lilt. Yet, savored long enough, Hiller can seem a wonderful deadpan comic. Through Feb. 8. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

Charles Long—An impressive exhibition—essentially, the artist's solo début—of some thoughtfully constructed, wacky sculptures. Long likes to take traditional sculptural techniques and subject them to conceptual logic, and he sometimes comes up with objects that have a magical combination of beauty and wit. Most of his sculptures resemble organic forms like coral or brains. His technique is to push a single object, such as a penny or his own hand, into a mound of clay and then cast the "negative" space that results. Perhaps the weirdest items are three works that look roughly like stylized floor lamps: each is a snaking metal wire with a cast piece of popcorn at its end. Through Feb. 29. (Koury, 89 Greene St.)

Richard Long / James Turrell—Two works by each artist. In the main gallery is a stunning installation, in which Long's "White Line," a floor sculpture consisting of a narrow bed of white marble pebbles, has the effect of a magic carpet leading to a massive Turrell drawing of Arizona's Roden Crater Project. Upstairs, Long takes on the more earthy role, with his "Somerset Turf Circle," and Turrell becomes the ethereal one, with an exquisite suite of aquatints (exhibited in 1990 at MOMA) of white "light" forms—triangles, cubes, planes—floating in a darkened room, usually in a corner. Through March 14. (SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St.)

CANINE CULTURE

Last year, a date dragged you to the Westminster Kennel Club show, and you fell in love—with the dogs. This year, you have your own tickets for the event (February 10 and 11, at Madison Square Garden), but you want to be well prepared. You want to read up on, say, Samoyeds. You make your first pilgrimage to the American Kennel Club Library, at 51 Madison Avenue (twentieth floor). "What richness!" you want to sing out, just as Katharine Hepburn did on her initial visit to the Laurences' house in "Little Women." The library's fifteen thousand volumes cover not only breed specifics but also training, grooming, nutrition, dog-show judging, dogs in art—you name it. Read one of the seventeen books on Samoyeds or one on any of the other hundred and thirty-two breeds that the A.K.C. recognizes. Watch a video on showing ("In the Ring with Mr. Wrong"), and then take a break from your research and examine the dog biographies ("The Memoirs of Chi-Chi the Chow") and the fiction selection, which ranges from the cozily familiar ("Lassie Come-Home" and "Lady and the Tramp") to the less well known ("Beth, A Sheep Dog"). Scrutinize the magazine-and-newspaper collection—three hundred and fifty different publications in all; peruse The Poodle Review. *Look up fancy names in the A.K.C.'s stud registry, which dates back to 1878. Find out facts to impress your friends (for instance, that 1990's most popular breed among new dog owners was the cocker spaniel). The library's manager, Susan Lesser, and her staff can aid you in your information quest. All material must be used in-house, but the library is open to the public five days a week—Mondays through Fridays, from nine to four. Woof.*

Christopher Lucas—Paintings made during a year spent in Seoul, Korea. They consist of metal, acrylic, and mother-of-pearl doodad appliqués—which suggest Navajo jewelry, tattoos, and the "I Ching"—set against inlaid wood grounds that are wavy, striped, or cutout. Lucas's work has been much more magical in the past. Now he seems to have gone native, and the results are somewhat cloying—a little like early Ashley Bickerton. The works suggest an old-fashioned abstractionist in search of a newfangled look. Through Feb. 22. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

Jack Pierson—This artist has taken the theme of forlorn love and played it out in a variety of ways, from the disengagement of a doodler to the psychotic self-torment of the broken-hearted. Among the strongest works are the artist's chaotic, impressive drawings. Whether they depict a corner of a room or the aptly invented word "youicide," the drawings are about sex and love, and they give form to half-expressed regrets or a longing for closeness. Adding to a sense of impending collapse are words such as "HOPELESSNESS" formed with found plastic letters, fragmentary sculptures made of cut-up posters pushpinned to the wall, and blowups of found snapshots and of photographs of discarded objects. The artist seems to have a soft spot for what has been cast off—one photograph is of the work sheet of a person who does odd jobs in exchange for a place to sleep—and to possess the need to create images for remembering the forgotten. Through Feb. 29. (Cugliani, 40 Wooster St.)

Jean-Pierre Raynaud—Assemblages and box constructions in which bottles of medical disinfectants, assorted shiny and sterilized equipment, gas masks, and radiation-warning signs are neatly arranged against backgrounds of spanking-clean white hospital tiles. The most impressive work is a series of glass-fronted boxes, each with a new folded wheelchair inside it. The works have the never-to-be-used quality of Koons, the ecologically minded minimalism of Bickerton, and the installation-theatricality of Steinbach, although, as was evident in a survey of Raynaud's earlier work in December at Castelli, these issues and materials were Raynaud's long before they attracted New Yorkers. And yet, despite this artist's prescience and intelligence, his work is frigid. Through Feb. 8. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Faith Ringgold—This artist's new narrative quilts, titled "The French Collection," are more like quilted paintings. They present a complex, wonderful narrative about Willia Marie Simone, a black American who went to Paris in 1920 to become an artist. The narrative enables Ringgold to fuse autobiography with an examination of gender and race in European modernism. The works bring to life a sense of the barriers that have faced black women artists, who, as Michele Wallace, the artist's daughter, points out in an excellent essay accompanying the exhibition, have rarely been considered "worthy of the notorious male gaze." In one of the richest works, Willia becomes Picasso's model and communes with the figures in "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" and with the African masks Picasso appropriated for his art. The masks tell her she can have Picasso's power if she gives up her womanhood, while *les demoiselles* say, "You go ahead, girl, and try this art thing. . . you don't have to give up nothing." Through Feb. 18. (Steinbaum, 132 Greene St.)

Allen Ruppersberg—Although Ruppersberg has been important in the development of Southern California's punning Conceptualism, his work is often difficult to approach—it's not so much hollow as distant and uncommonly soft-spoken. This exhibition includes four works from the seventies, as well as a group of newer pieces. There are two series of soft-focus narrative drawings, including some Biblical subjects. One of the tersest works, consisting of a box of paper with a human profile cut through the stack and the words "self-portrait and sculpture" written on the side of the box, is like a riddle about literature and art, drawing and sculpture, identity and its absence. The recent works lift images from educational films of the nineteen-fifties, when there was a "how to" for every task, a solution to every problem. Through Feb. 15. (Burgin, 130 Prince St.)

Rachel Whiteread—This sculptor, out of her concern with the space around ordinary objects, makes works of profound mystery and eerie poetry. One work, rendered in fragile, yellowish dental plaster, looks as if it would just fill the space between a bed and the floor. Another, an arched form made of reddish-brown rubber, depicts the "negative" space around a mortuary slab but also suggests a doorway laid to rest. Through Feb. 8. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Group Show—A good gallery group offering, which includes large felt banners by Mike Kelley, which he based on flyers made by college students in search of female roommates, by actors, and by sports fans; Jim Shaw's reliefs, small paintings, cartoons, assemblages, and light box, all of which concern sex, drugs, rock and roll, and science fiction; and Robert Longo's "America on Wheels," a large sculpture of a map lying flat on its back, which must be a visual pun on the current diminished state of American cultural imperialism. Through Feb. 29. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Short List—**PETER AGOSTINI**, Clasen, 470 Broome St. (through Feb. 29); **KARL BENJAMIN**, Snyder, 588 Broadway (through Feb. 15); **SONIA DELAUNAY** and **MICHAEL BOYD**, Zarre, 154 Wooster St. (through Feb. 29); **JANE DICKSON**, Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Feb. 29); **TOM DUNCAN**, Einstein, 591 Broadway (through Feb. 29); **ROBERT HARMS**, Perry, 472 Broome St. (through Feb. 22); **MEL KENDRICK** and **MIGUEL RIOS**, Weber, 142 Greene St. (through Feb. 22); **ALFRED LESLIE**, Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through March 28); **ROY LICHTENSTEIN**, Castelli, 420 West Broadway, and 65 Thompson Street Gallery (through Feb. 29); **MARIO MERZ**, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through Feb. 22); **BARNETT NEWMAN**, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. (through March 14); **ANDREW SPENCE** (through Feb. 29) and **LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE** (through March 7), Protetch, 560 Broadway; **ROBERT WILSON**, Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (through Feb. 29).

OTHER GALLERIES

Dennis Oppenheim—An extraordinary show of a major artist who has been in need of a good airing. The many blueprints and photographs here documenting Oppenheim's work from the late sixties make for a list of Conceptual art's greatest hits. In the intelligent and poetic "Annual Rings," the artist used shovelled snow—on either side of a river that straddles the border between the United States and Canada—to reproduce a tree's age rings. "Protection," a potent critique of the museum system, consisted of a dozen ferocious guard dogs chained to stakes around the perimeter of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Following his forays into Conceptual art and earthworks, Oppenheim moved to the forefront of an early-seventies trend in which the body was used to reintroduce the figure into art without resorting to old-fashioned figuration. (Included is his landmark 1970 work "Reading Position for Second Degree Burn.") Ambivalence toward figuration

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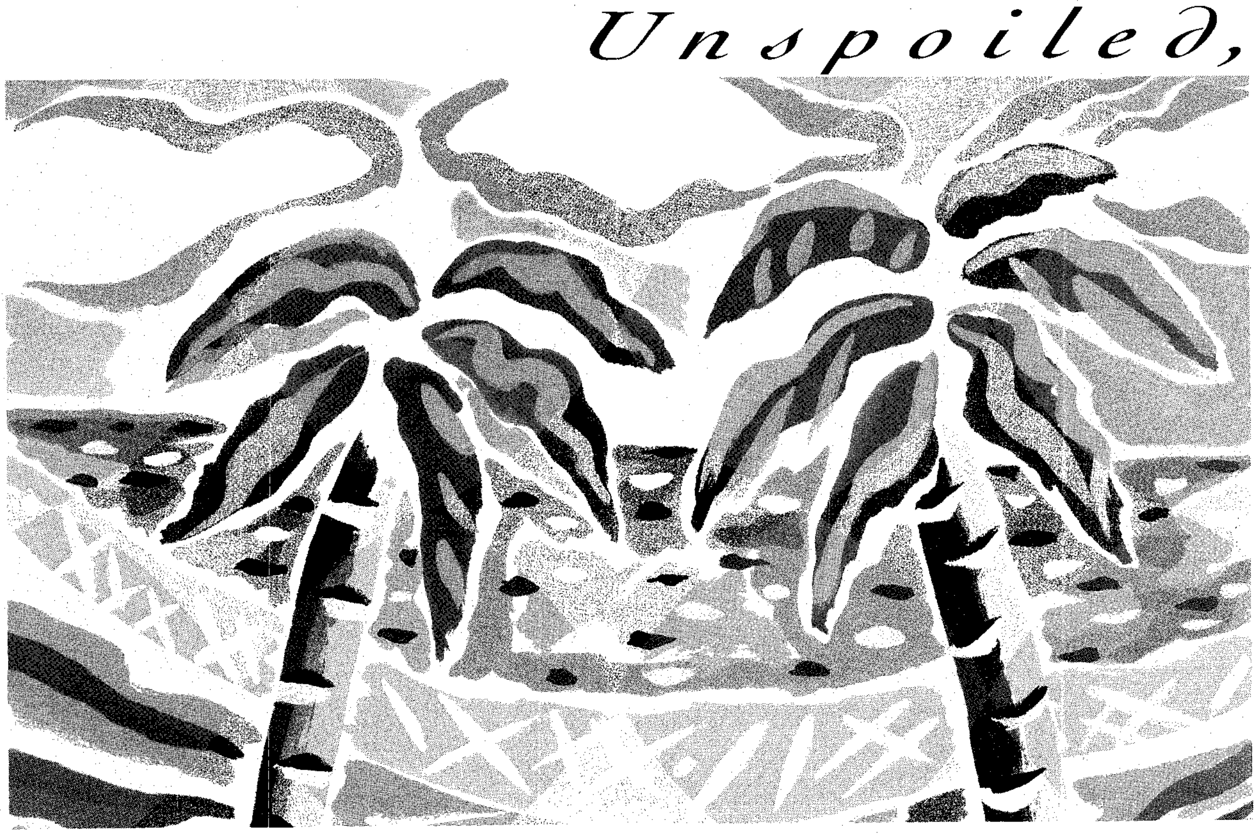

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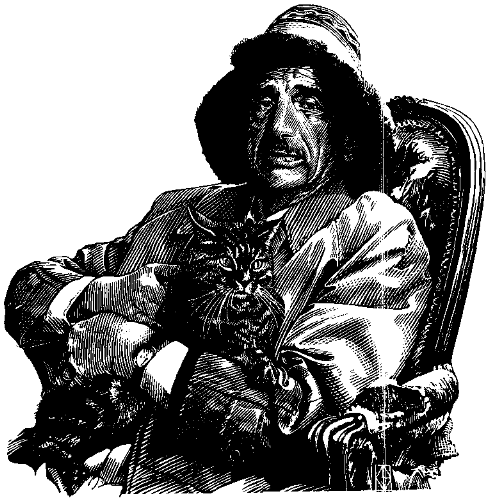

Edouard Boubat

is stated in a hilariously horrifying way in "Attempt to Raise Hell," which consists of a meditative marionette that periodically clangs its head violently against a heavy metal bell. There's a photo-document of an environmental piece that poignantly mourns the death of the avant-garde by reducing "radicality," the motivating ambition of Oppenheim's generation, to a word written in flares on a hillside. The show also features a number of remarkably demented pieces from the past several years, all of which have something or other to do with middle age. These range from a dreamlike gathering of sculptures of deer with flame antlers to a team of silver-painted Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy dolls frantically fornicating. Through Feb. 9. (P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

WE can't remember a time when we've seen such large crowds of people looking and laughing at Conceptual video art as those at Bill Wegman's Whitney show the weekend it opened. Surely Wegman owes his enormous audience in large part to his popular and charming photographic narratives. First there were those with his weimaraner Man Ray, who ironically epitomized that show-business term "a natural," and then, after that dog died, the same kind of irresistible personality portraiture with Fay Ray, her litter, and other two- and four-legged subjects.

It is tempting to dismiss Wegman's human/dog Polaroids as mere crowd pleasers. That's why it's fortunate that this exhibition displays his drawings, his paintings, and his videos as well as his photographs: it shows how incomplete such a judgment would be. With this show—which originated at the Kunstsmuseum Lucerne and has since been travelling (with varying content) to different museums—one has the chance to get a deeper view of Wegman's skills and of his perceptions of art and the world. As with so many other brilliant comic artists, with Wegman pessimism is allowed to show itself—you see it clearly at work in some of his intricate landscape paintings. And it's there, too, in seemingly simpler works, such as the offhand little drawing in which two birds pull at the same worm. A more subtle, yet complex psychological approach operates in a domestic-sized, cartoonish painting titled "Museum of Beer."

Although some may find certain aspects of Wegman's work weaker than others—which may just have to do with exposure—nobody can doubt that this artist has his own vision, one that is as moving as it is because it so often seems to mirror our own feelings. Much of Wegman's work expands the territory of cartoons. When he does this too bluntly, as in some of his photographs showing Fay Ray dressed up as a doll, his work can be a bit limited. But when he is cleverer, as in his picture "Lolita," depicting Battina (Fay Ray's offspring) crossing her "Put the Blame on Mame" legs, get ready for true wit.

EDOUARD BOUBAT—Photographs taken from the fifties to the present, in France, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, and North America. These pictures have a touching modesty and a strong sense of atmosphere. Two window views taken in Paris, one through a lace curtain, the other of condensation blurring the view, have a graceful sense of place. And four pictures all articulate the texture of beautiful long hair with an unparalleled sense of tactility and intimacy. Boubat's best work doesn't try to impress the viewer with big statements, and his unassuming observations catch bits and pieces of life in convincing ways. This show presents a strong argument for a major exhibition of work by this underappreciated artist. Through Feb. 29. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

IO DE JANEIRO .. SALTILLO .. SAN FRANCISCO .. SAN SALVADOR .. SÃO PAULO .. SEATTLE .. SEOUL .. SHANGHAI .. SINGAPORE .. TAIWAN .. TIKAL .. TOKYO .

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MUSIC

DURING the long tenure of Charles Wadsworth, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center did much to establish chamber music as an essential component of Lincoln Center's operation and brought an impressive number of distinguished musicians together in works—and in partnerships—we might not otherwise have heard. But over the years wags began to call it the Sight-Reading Society of Lincoln Center; the feeling arose that in place of the special qualities of great chamber playing—the intuitive, long-honed "playing as one"; the understanding of the repertoire that comes from long acquaintance—the Chamber Music Society often substituted the hearty facility, generic expressiveness, and can-do expertise that characterize so much of instrumental music-making in America. We always had the feeling that the Chamber Music Society's adoption of an independently functioning string quartet for that important branch of the literature was a tacit acknowledgment that its members didn't really have the time to sit down and make music together the way a good quartet does.

Mr. Wadsworth's successor, Fred Sherry, shook up the ensemble a few seasons back by reshaping its roster and reorienting its programming—too far, his detractors have said, in the direction of stern modernism. To what extent he has achieved a reorientation in actual performing habits we cannot say for sure, because, having lost the habit, we've been to comparatively few of the group's concerts recently. The program of February 7 and 9, though, looks intriguing and representative of the directions Mr. Sherry has taken. It employs no fewer than twenty-two performers (but no more than ten at a time), in six works; Mr. Sherry will play in five of them, including a major string quartet—Bartók's Third—rehearsed "in-house," as it were, rather than by an independent ensemble. Also on the program are Debussy's "Chansons de Bilitis," with Claire Bloom as the narrator; a short work by Boulez; a flute-centered quintet by André Jolivet; and two works by Oliver Knussen, one of them based on "Winnie-the-Pooh."

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**FIDELIO,** with Hildegard Behrens, Sylvia McNair, Reiner Goldberg, and Matti Salminen; conducted by Christof Perick. (Feb. 3 at 8 and Feb. 8 at 1:30.). . . **DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER,** with Janis Martin, Gary Lakes, James Morris, and Matti Salminen; James Conlon. (Feb. 4 and Feb. 7 at 8.). . . **TURANDOT,** with Gwyneth Jones, Teresa Stratas, and Vladimir Popov; Nello Santi. (Feb. 5 and Feb. 8 at 8.). . . With Ghena Dimitrova, Teresa Stratas, and Vladimir Popov; Nello Santi. (Feb. 11 at 8.). . . **TANNHÄUSER,** with Anne Evans, Tatiana Troyanos, William Johns, and Andreas Schmidt; Christof Perick. (Feb. 6 and Feb. 10 at 7:30.). . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Frederica von Stade, Thomas Hampson, Stanford Olsen, Louis Quilico, and Samuel Ramey; Ralf Weikert. (Feb. 12 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

L'OPÉRA FRANÇAIS DE NEW YORK—Yves Abel conducts a concert version, in French, of Cherubini's "Médée" (premièred in 1797, with a plot deriving from Euripides, via Corneille); featuring soprano Susan von Reichenbach as the ex-wife with a sharp knife and an axe to grind. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 7 at 8.)

"PAGLIACCI"—Riccardo Muti directs a concert version of Leoncavallo's opera; with soprano Daniela Dessi, tenor Luciano Pavarotti, baritone Juan Pons, the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 11 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Andrew Davis conducts the "Sea Interludes," from Britten's "Peter Grimes," Elgar's First Symphony, and Mozart's Bassoon Concerto (featuring the orchestra's principal bassoonist, Judith LeClair). (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 5-6 and Feb. 8 at 8; Feb. 7 at 2; and Feb. 11 at 7:30.). . . **NOTE:** On Feb. 5 at 7, ticketholders may attend a pre-concert performance of Mozart's C-Major Piano Trio, K. 548, played by members of the orchestra.

JUPITER SYMPHONY—Though the Romanian pianist Dinu Lipatti died in 1950 (at the age of thirty-three), his reputation for pianism of fastidious delicacy lives on through his recordings. But many listeners may be unaware that Lipatti was also a capable composer; following studies with Dukas and Nadia Boulanger, he produced a modest catalogue of works, nearly all of which involved the piano. Jens Nygaard conducts Lipatti's "Concertino in Classic Style for Piano and String Orchestra" (one of his earliest pieces, composed in 1936), with Seymour Lipkin as the soloist. Also on the program are orchestral works by Bach and Haydn, and Schubert's "Grand Rondo" in A Major (for piano, four hands, played by Messrs. Lipkin and Nygaard). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 3 at 8.)

STATE SYMPHONIC KAPELLE OF MOSCOW—At Carnegie Hall, Gennady Rozhdestvensky conducting the orchestra, which relinquished its former name of "Soviet Philharmonic" several weeks ago. Feb. 3 at 8: Rimsky-Korsakov's "Russian Easter Overture," Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3, and Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto (featuring pianist Viktoria Postnikova, who is the conductor's wife). . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 8: Ives' "Robert Browning Overture," Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 1, and Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (featuring violinist Alexander Rozhdestvensky, who is the conductor's son).

MUSICA SACRA—Richard Westenburg directs music by Brahms as well as recent pieces by Anthony Davis and Peter Schickele (his "Go For Broke: A Comedy for Chorus," which relates the tale of a lottery winner). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 5 at 8.)

NEW YORK BACH ENSEMBLE—Kent Tritle directs two solo cantatas by Bach (No. 35, featuring contralto Karen Krueger, and No. 82, featuring baritone Paul Rowe), and doubles as soloist in a Handel organ concerto. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 439-8044. Feb. 5 at 8.)

BOSTON SYMPHONY—With Seiji Ozawa on the podium and Mahler's Sixth Symphony on the music stands. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 5-6 at 8.)

"MOZART MASSES IN CONCERT"—Margaret Hillis (who is currently spending her thirtieth—and, at least officially, her final—year as the director of the Chicago Symphony's choir) directs the Interlochen Arts Academy Choir and Orchestra in an all-Mozart program that includes the "Dominicus" Mass (K. 66). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 6 at 8.)

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC SYMPHONY—Zealous Mahlerites not sated by the preceding two evenings with the Boston Symphony may catch Mahler's Sixth Symphony yet again—this time conducted by Glen Cortese—along with Barber's "Second Essay." (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Feb. 7 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ORPHEUS—The chamber orchestra performs Bach's Third Suite and Mozart's Symphony No. 29. Also on the program is Berg's Chamber Concerto—not a piece that springs to mind when one envisions a conductorless orchestra such as this—with the solo parts entrusted to pianist Peter Serkin and violinist Todd Phillips. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 8 at 8.)

GREGG SMITH SINGERS—Performing choral music written to take advantage of spatial acoustics; including works by Jacob Druckman, Ross Lee Finney, and Charles Ives, among many others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 8 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-2990.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Gerard Schwarz conducts Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin" and the première of Stephen Albert's "Distant Hills" (consisting of two fifteen-minute-long settings of monologues from Joyce's "Ulysses," to be sung here by soprano Juliana Gondek and tenor Mark Bleeke). The concert also includes a performance of Dvořák's Piano Concerto, featuring the newly octogenarian pianist Rudolf Firkušný, who may be considered well-informed about the piece, having first studied it—many, many years ago—with the composer Josef Suk, who was Dvořák's son-in-law. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Feb. 8 at 8 and Feb. 9 at 3.)

RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY—George Rothman conducts works for string orchestra by Mendelssohn, Honegger, Bartók (his "Divertimento"), and Stephen Hartke. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 9 at 3.)

CANTERBURY CHORAL SOCIETY—Charles Dodsley Walker directs the chorus, an orchestra, and soloists in Vaughan Williams' "Benedicite" as well as Britten's audience-sing-along cantata "Saint Nicolas" (which includes the wonderfully titled movement "Nicolas and the Pickled Boys," describing the good saint's miraculous retrieval and reassembly of three lads who had been dismembered and marinated in a vat of brine). (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Feb. 9 at 4. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

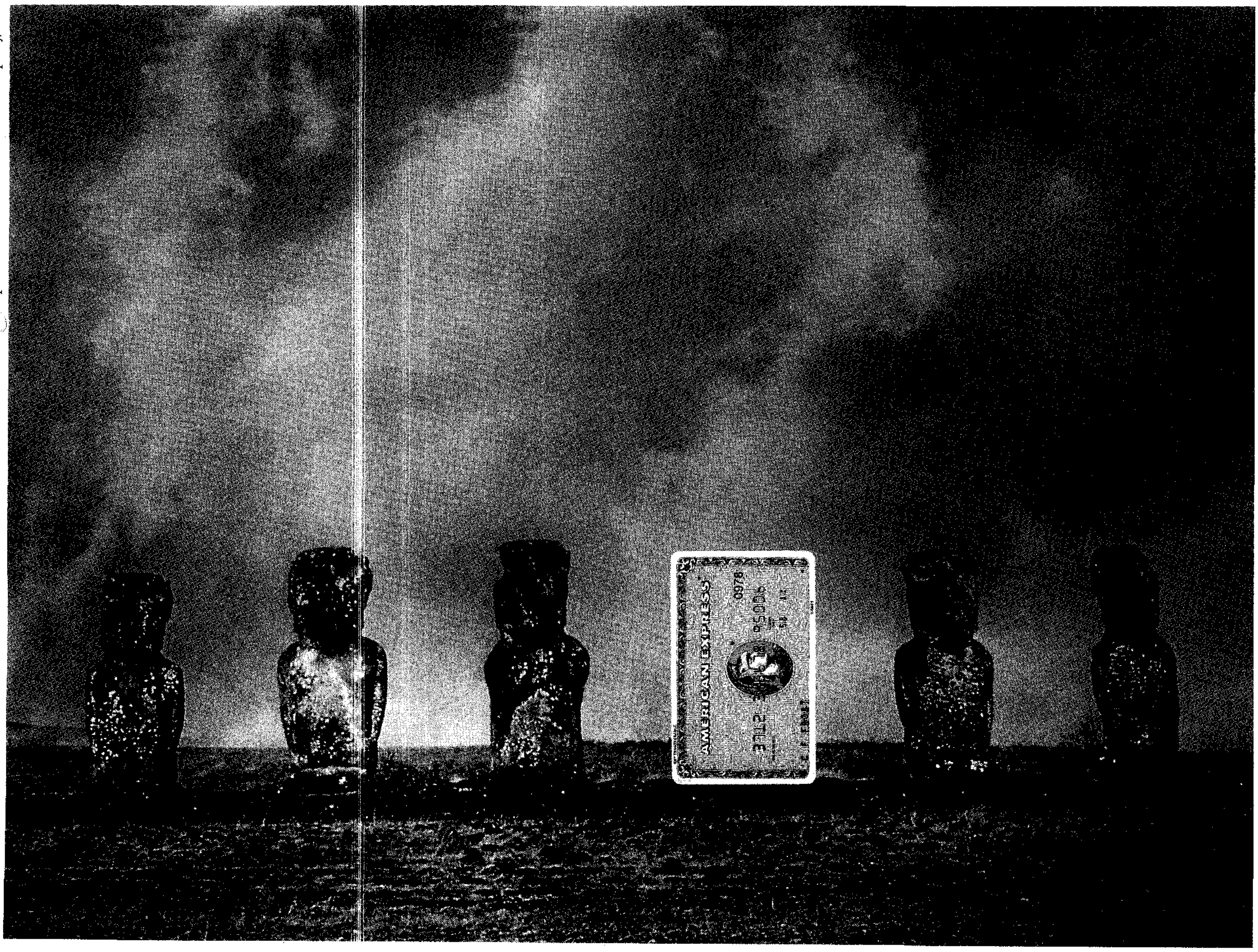
MANNES COLLEGE ORCHESTRA—Samuel Wong conducts Glinka's "Russlan and Ludmilla" Overture, Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony, and Gershwin's blues-tinged Piano Concerto (featuring André Gremillet). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. Feb. 10 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

CLARION CONCERTS—Newell Jenkins conducts a concert of English music, including orchestral suites by Elgar and Holst, and Finzi's cantata "Dies Natalis" (featuring tenor Robert White). (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)

RECITALS

JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL—The flutist celebrates his seventieth birthday by playing chamber music with some friends: violinist Isaac Stern, cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, and his longtime accompanist John Steele Ritter. The program includes trios by Haydn, Mozart, François Devienne, and Weber, as well as assorted other works by Handel, Telemann, and Antonín Reicha. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 3 at 8.)

JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET—Performing Bach's "The Art of Fugue," assisted by violist Samuel Rhodes (who will play a viola adapted for the occasion to extend its range downward,



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enabling the player to render Bach's lines at the notated pitch, without troublesome octave transpositions). (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Feb. 3 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are necessary, call 769-7406.). . . ¶ The ensemble performs quartets by Shostakovich (his Thirteenth) and Milhaud (his Seventeenth); cellist Bernard Greenhouse joins the foursome for Schubert's superbal C-Major String Quintet. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Speculum Musicae—The chamber musicians perform works for string quartet by Ruth Crawford Seeger (her "String Quartet 1931") and Steven Mackey (his "On All Fours"), as well as Donald Martino's Quartet for Clarinet and String Trio and Elliott Carter's "Con Leggerezza Pensosa" (a trio for clarinet, violin, and cello, completed in 1990). (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 4 at 8.)

Kathleen Supové—The pianist continues her series of "Exploding Piano" concerts, which explore extended, non-traditional musical possibilities afforded by the instrument. This installment features music by Louis Andriessen, Peter Schat, Giacinto Scelsi, Andy Vores, and Rob Zuidam. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Gregory Haimovsky—Pianist, performing music by Haydn, Chopin, and Debussy (Book Two of his Preludes), as well as U.S. premières of compositions by Mark Kopytman and Sergei Slonimsky. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Alison Deane—Pianist, in a program of works by Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 6 at 8.)

Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet—The reigning recorder quartet (named after a cartoon lion on Dutch television, whose theme song the group has occasionally programmed) offers a concert that includes works by Palestrina, Byrd, Bach, and a host of modern composers. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 7 at 8.)

Emerson String Quartet—Playing three of the six quartets Mozart dedicated to Haydn: K. 421, K. 428, and K. 465 (the "Dissonance"). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 7 at 8.)

Takács String Quartet—Performing the American première of György Kurtág's Quartet No. 3, Bartók's Quartet No. 3, Haydn's D-Major Quartet (Op. 76, No. 5), and Schumann's Piano Quintet (with the assistance of András Schiff). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 7 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting Bartók's String Quartet No. 3, as well as works for more unusual instrumental and vocal combinations (by Debussy, Boulez, André Jolivet, and Oliver Knussen). The Society's numerous guests include soprano Lisa Saffer and narrator Claire Bloom. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 7 at 8 and Feb. 9 at 5.)

Hermann Prey—The baritone, assisted by pianist Leonard Hokanson, performs Schumann's "Dichterliebe" and "Liederkreis" (Op. 24). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 8 at 8.)

Lark String Quartet—Performing Haydn's "Lark" Quartet, Mozart's "Dissonance" Quartet, and Szymanowski's Quartet No 1. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Feb. 8 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Borodin String Quartet—Performing quartets by Prokofiev (his Second), Shostakovich (his Fifteenth), and Schnittke (his Third). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 9 at 2.)

Christina Kiss—Continuing her comprehensive survey of Liszt's piano music, the pianist performs four "Fleurs Mélodiques des Alpes" and the "Concert Paraphrase of Verdi's 'Ernani,'" among other works. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 9 at 2.)

David Buechner and Richard Locker—The pianist and the cellist conclude their survey of Beethoven's cello-and-piano music. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Feb. 9 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Mendelssohn String Quartet—Performing Beethoven's Quartet No. 16 (Op. 135), Tchaikovsky's Quartet No. 3, and Mendelssohn's "Andante and Scherzo" (Op. 81). Presented by the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music. (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. Feb. 9 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Si-Yo Music Society—Presenting chamber music by Mozart, Mendelssohn, d'Indy, and Meyer Kupferman. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Feb. 9 at 3.)

Marion Verbruggen and John Gibbons—The recorder player and the harpsichordist team up for a Baroque program that includes a suite by Hotteterre and a pair of trio sonatas by Bach. Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. 666-0675. Feb. 9 at 4.)

Jessye Norman—Soprano, performing four songs from Tchaikovsky's "Mélodies Françaises" (Op. 65), seven from Wolf's "Italienisches Liederbuch," and six from Schoenberg's "Brettl-Lieder," as well as "The Confession Stone (Songs of Mary)," a song cycle by Robert Fleming. Pianist Phillip Moll assists. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 9 at 7:30.)

Thomas Hampson—The baritone, assisted by pianist Craig Rutenberg, performs songs by Schubert, Loewe, Rossini, and Meyerbeer, as well as by a handful of Americans (Griffes, Bowles, Copland, and Walter Damrosch). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 9 at 8.)

Eroica Trio—The violin-cello-and-piano ensemble presents Lalo's C-Minor Trio, Brahms' B-Major Trio, and the première of "Angel Chant," a new trio by Augusta Read Thomas. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Manhattan Percussion Ensemble—Claire Heldrich directs recent compositions. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Feb. 10 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Daniel String Quartet—The official string quartet of the Israeli Army plays works by Schubert, Gounod, Webern, and Shostakovich. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70 St. 288-0700. Feb. 11 at 5:45.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Presenting works by Stefan Wolpe, Brian Fennelly, Alec Wilder, Eric Ewazen, and de Falla; most feature Chris Gekker, playing trumpet or flugelhorn. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 11 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Performing music by Mozart: two trios and the G-Minor Piano Quartet (in which violist Lawrence Dutton assists). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

"Highlights in Jazz"—Doc Cheatham, Sol Yaged, Jack Lesberg, Warren Chiasson, and others. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Feb. 6 at 8.)

Glen Velez—With Randy Crafton and Jan Hagiwara. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Feb. 6 at 8. Tickets available at the door on the night of the concert.)

Phyllis Hyman and Keith Washington—Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Feb. 6 at 7 and Feb. 7 at 7 and 11.

George Coleman Quartet—Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 7 at 8.

Music of North India—Performed by Steve Gorn, David Trasoff, and Kinnar Kumar Seen. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Feb. 7 at 8. Tickets available at the door on the night of the concert.)

Bill Frisell

Bill Frisell—Solo on Feb. 7, and with Kermit Driscoll, Joey Baron, Don Byron, and Guy Klucevsek on Feb. 8. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Concerts at 8.)

"New Sounds"—Presenting the Kronos Quartet and the Either/Orchestra. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Feb. 9 at 3.)

Orlando (Puntilla) Rios—With his ensemble, Nueva Generación. (Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. 966-4444. Feb. 12 at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Feb. 5. . . . ¶ Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, Feb. 9. . . . ¶ Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Feb. 12. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Away until Feb. 15, when they face the Vancouver Canucks.

Devils—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Feb. 4 at 7:35.

Knicks—Vs. the Miami Heat, Feb. 4. . . . ¶ Vs. the Houston Rockets, Feb. 6. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Seattle Supersonics, Feb. 5 at 7:30.

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

CHAMPIONSHIP—TRACK & FIELD

Millrose Games—A world-class indoor track meet, this year featuring Leroy Burrell, André Cason, and Maria de Lurdes Mutola. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Feb. 7 at 5:45.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Dog Days—On Feb. 10-11, the dog world will turn its attention to the hundred-and-sixteenth annual Westminster Kennel Club show. For these two days, Madison Square Garden will have the atmosphere of both an academic convention and a blowout party. Thirty-one whippets, eleven schipperkes, nineteen weimaraners, forty-one golden retrievers, and hundreds of other canines will be in attendance, along with their breeders, handlers, owners, groomers, and fans. Best-in-show, the prize of prizes, will be awarded on Tuesday night, in time for the eleven-o'clock news. But it's better to see the ceremony in person. Call 465-6000 for information about tickets.

Readings—Feb. 6 at 8: Sonia Sanchez and Donna Masini read from their own poetry. (Barnard Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 9:30: Wanda Coleman and Patricia Smith read from their own poetry. (Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 E. 3rd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 10: Hattie Gossett and Mike Tyler read from their own poetry. (Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 8: Wanda Coleman, Jeffery Renard Allen, Brenda Marie Osbey, and Reginald McKnight read from their own works. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 8: Michael Frayn reads from his own work and then talks a bit with Calvin Trillin. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.). . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 7: Li-Young Lee and Chase Twichell read from their own poetry. (French Institute-Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Talks—Feb. 6 at 6:15: Allen Lacy talks about the influence of the British on American gardeners. (Horticultural Society of New York, 128 W. 58th St. For information about tickets, call 220-8747.). . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 6:30: Kenneth Frampton gives a lecture commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Museum of Modern Art's first architecture show. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9500.)

Walks—Sponsored by Citywalks: Greenwich Village, Feb. 8 at 1, and City Hall and environs, Feb. 9 at 1. For more information, call 989-2456. . . . ¶ Sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours: Chinatown, Feb. 9 at 1, and Little Italy and surrounding neighborhoods, Feb. 9 at 12:30. For more information, call 439-1090.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 19.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "Black Robe" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 4: "Love Crimes" (directed by Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin. From Feb. 5: (Separate admissions) "Love Crimes"; and "Prospero's Books" (Peter Greenaway), with John Gielgud.

Theatre 3: Through Feb. 4: "Prospero's Books." From Feb. 5: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury.

Theatre 4: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).

Theatre 5: "Until the End of the World" (Wim Wenders), with William Hurt.

Theatre 6: "Madame Bovary" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

Through Feb. 6: "The Golden Coach" (1953, Jean Renoir), with Anna Magnani; and "Life on a String" (Chen Kaige; in Chinese).

From Feb. 7: "Rocco and His Brothers" (†).

Newman Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

Through Feb. 6: "Rocco and His Brothers" (†).

From Feb. 7: Theatre closed.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 6: "Freejack" (†). From Feb. 7: "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere, Kim Basinger, Uma Thurman, and Eric Roberts.

Theatre 2: "Into the Sun" (Fritz Kiersch), with Anthony Michael Hall and Michael Paré.

Theatre 3: "Naked Lunch" (†).

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)

Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Prince of Tides" (†).

Theatre 3: "Alan & Naomi" (Sterling VanWagenen), with Lukas Haas.

Theatre 4: "The Prince of Tides" (†).

Theatre 5: "Bugsy" (†).

Theatre 6: "High Heels" (†).

Theatre 7: "JFK" (†).

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Feb. 6: "Strangers in Good Company" (Cynthia Scott).

From Feb. 7: "The Lunatic" (Lol Crenne).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Inner Circle" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Tom Hulce.

Theatre 3: Through Feb. 6: "Daughters of the Dust" (Julie Dash). From Feb. 7: "Medicine Man" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Lorraine Bracco.

Theatre 4: "Rush" (†).

Theatre 5: "Father of the Bride" (†).

Theatre 6: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Theatre 7: "Paris Is Burning" (Jennie Livingston), a documentary; and "Antonia and Jane" (Beeban Kidron).

Cinema Village 3rd Avenue, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

"Let Him Have It" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "Hook" (†).

Theatre 2: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson).

Theatre 3: "Hard Promises" (Martin Davidson), with Sissy Spacek and William Petersen.

Theatre 4: "Freejack" (†).

Theatre 5: "Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.

Theatre 6: Through Feb. 6: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin. From Feb. 7: "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere, Kim Basinger, Uma Thurman, and Eric Roberts.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Father of the Bride" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"Shining Through" (David Seltzer), with Michael Douglas and Melanie Griffith.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

Theatre 2: "Alan & Naomi" (Sterling VanWagenen), with Lukas Haas.

Theatre 3: Through Feb. 6: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†). From Feb. 7: "Medicine Man" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Lorraine Bracco.

Theatre 4: "Bugsy" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).

Theatre 2: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson).

Theatre 3: "Freejack" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"The Prince of Tides" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"The Fisher King" (†).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "Father of the Bride" (†).

Theatre 2: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Alan & Naomi" (Sterling VanWagenen), with Lukas Haas and Michael Gross.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson).

Theatre 2: "For the Boys" (Mark Rydell), with Bette Midler and James Caan.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Into the Sun" (Fritz Kiersch), with Anthony Michael Hall and Michael Paré.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet), with Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary-Louise Parker, and Mary Stuart Masterson.

Theatre 2: "Shining Through" (David Seltzer), with Michael Douglas and Melanie Griffith.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 6: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†). From Feb. 7: "Medicine Man" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Lorraine Bracco.

Theatre 2: "Rush" (†).

Theatre 3: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)

Theatre 1: "Hard Promises" (Martin Davidson), with Sissy Spacek and William Petersen.

Theatre 2: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy.

Theatre 3: "Hook" (†).

Theatre 4: "Until the End of the World" (Wim Wenders), with William Hurt.

Theatre 5: "Naked Lunch" (†).

Theatre 6: "Cape Fear" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "Bugsy" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 6: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans. From Feb. 7: "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere, Kim Basinger, Uma Thurman, and Eric Roberts.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"At Play in the Fields of the Lord" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "Freejack" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Prince of Tides" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

"Hear My Song" (Peter Chelsom), with Ned Beatty.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

"JFK" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).

Theatre 2: "Shining Through" (David Seltzer), with Michael Douglas and Melanie Griffith.

Loews Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)

Theatre 1: "The Prince of Tides" (†).

Theatre 2: "Freejack" (†).

Theatre 3: "Hook" (†).

Theatre 4: "Bugsy" (†).

Theatre 5: "Alan & Naomi" (Sterling VanWagenen), with Lukas Haas.

Theatre 6: "Hard Promises" (Martin Davidson), with Sissy Spacek and William Petersen.

Theatre 7: Through Feb. 6: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin. From Feb. 7: "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere, Kim Basinger, Uma Thurman, and Eric Roberts.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 6: "Father of the Bride" (†). From Feb. 7: "Medicine Man" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Lorraine Bracco.

Theatre 2: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: "Thank You and Goodnight!" (1990, directed by Jan Oxenberg).

Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.

Theatre 3: "35 Up" (Michael Apted), a documentary.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "Shining Through" (David Seltzer), with Michael Douglas and Melanie Griffith.

Theatre 2: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "Hard Promises" (Martin Davidson), with Sissy Spacek and William Petersen.

Theatre 2: "Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 6: "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse" (†). From Feb. 7: "Winter in Lisbon" (Angel Amigo, in French), with Dizzy Gillespie.

Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (†).

Theatre 3: "Life Is Sweet" (†).

Theatre 4: "Rhapsody in August" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 6: "Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline. From Feb. 7: "Medicine Man" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Lorraine Bracco.

Theatre 2: "Grand Canyon."

Theatre 3: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet), with Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary-Louise Parker, and Mary Stuart Masterson.

Theatre 4: "Shining Through" (David Seltzer), with Michael Douglas and Melanie Griffith.

Theatre 5: "JFK" (†).

Theatre 6: "Fried Green Tomatoes."

Theatre 7: "Bugsy" (†).

Theatre 8: "The Prince of Tides" (†).

Theatre 9: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).

Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "Rush" (†).

Theatre 3: "Into the Sun" (Fritz Kiersch), with Anthony Michael Hall and Michael Paré.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "In the Heat of Passion" (Rodman Flender), with Sally Kirkland.

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 4: "My Own Private Idaho" (†). From Feb. 5: "Life Is Sweet" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Fisher King" (†).

Theatre 4: "At Play in the Fields of the Lord" (†).

Theatre 5: "The Black Robe" (†).

Theatre 6: "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Shining Through" (David Seltzer), with Michael Douglas and Melanie Griffith.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"The Inner Circle" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Tom Hulce.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Naked Lunch" (†).

At MOMA, "Stairway to Heaven"

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Madame Bovary" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 4: "Life Is Sweet" (†). From Feb. 5: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Kafka" (Steven Soderbergh), with Jeremy Irons.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"JFK" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Voyager" (Volker Schlöndorff), with Sam Shepard, Julie Delpy, and Barbara Sukowa.
Theatre 2: "High Heels" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski, in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet), with Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary-Louise Parker, and Mary Stuart Masterson.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Hard Promises" (Martin Davidson), with Sissy Spacek and William Petersen.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 6: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps. From Feb. 7: "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere, Kim Basinger, Uma Thurman, and Eric Roberts.
Theatre 3: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).
Theatre 4: "Freejack" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 6: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin. From Feb. 7: "Medicine Man" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Lorraine Bracco.
Theatre 6: "Bugsy" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "Rush" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 2: "Into the Sun" (Fritz Kiersch), with Anthony Michael Hall and Michael Paré.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 2: "Freejack" (†).
Theatre 3: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 6: "Rush" (†). From Feb. 7: "Final Analysis" (directed by Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere, Kim Basinger, Uma Thurman, and Eric Roberts.
Theatre 5: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 6: "Love Crimes" (Lizzie Borden), with Sean Young and Patrick Bergin.
Theatre 7: "Into the Sun" (Fritz Kiersch), with Anthony Michael Hall and Michael Paré.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 6: "Hard Promises" (Martin Davidson), with Sissy Spacek and William Petersen. From Feb. 7: "Medicine Man" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Lorraine Bracco.
Theatre 2: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 6: "The Addams Family" (Barry Sonnenfeld), with Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia, and Christopher Lloyd; and "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley. From Feb. 7: "Hard Promises."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cape Fear" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through Feb. 11: "Guilty as Charged" (directed by Sam Irvin), with Rod Steiger and Lauren Hutton.
From Feb. 12: "Shanghai Blues" (1984, Tsui Hark; in Chinese, with English and Chinese subtitles) and "Boat People" (1982, Ann Hui; in Chinese).

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Feb. 4: Short Buster Keaton films from the thirties.
Feb. 5: "The Villain Still Pursued Her" (1940, Edward Cline), with Buster Keaton, Alan Mowbray, and Hugh Herbert; "Li'l Abner" (1940, Albert S. Rogell), with Granville Owen, Martha O'Driscoll, Mona Ray, Johnnie Morris, and Keaton; and "The Jones Family in Hollywood" (1939, Malcolm St. Clair), with Jed Prouty, Spring Byington, and William Tracy.
Feb. 6-9: "Our Hospitality" (1923, Buster Keaton and Jack G. Blystone; silent), with Keaton, Natalie Talmadge, and Joe Keaton; and three short Keaton films.
Feb. 10-11: "Hollywood Cavalcade" (1939, Irving Cummings), with Alice Faye, Don Ameche, and Buster Keaton; and short films with Keaton and Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle.
From Feb. 12: "The General" (1926, Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman), with Keaton and Marion Mack; and three short Keaton films.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 3: "The Ritual" (1969, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ingrid Thulin, Anders Ek, and Gunnar Björnstrand; and "After the Rehearsal" (1984, Bergman; in Swedish), with Lena Olin, Erland Josephson, and Thulin.
Feb. 4: "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (1958, Richard Brooks), with Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, and Burl Ives; and "Night of the Iguana" (1964, John Huston), with Richard Burton, Ava Gardner, Deborah Kerr, and Sue Lyon.
Feb. 5: "And Then There Were None" (1945, René Clair), with Barry Fitzgerald, Walter Huston, and Louis Hayward; and "The Old Dark House" (1932, James Whale).
Feb. 6: "The Reckless Moment" (1949, Max Ophuls), with James Mason and Joan Bennett; and "The Exile" (†).
Feb. 7-8: "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" (1967, David Swift), with Robert Morse, Michele Lee, and Rudy Vallée; and "The Producers" (1968, Mel Brooks), with Zero Mostel, Dick Shawn, and Gene Wilder.
Feb. 9: "Citizen Kane" (1941, Orson Welles), with Welles; and "The Magnificent Ambersons" (1942, Orson Welles), with Dolores Costello, Joseph Cotten, Tim Holt, and Agnes Moorehead.
Feb. 10: "Bob le Flambeur" (1955, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French); and "My Life to Live" (1962, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina.
Feb. 11: "To Catch a Thief" (1955, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant and Grace Kelly; and "Wait Until Dark" (1967, Terence Young), with Audrey Hepburn, Alan Arkin, and Richard Crenna.
Feb. 12: "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" (1940, John Cromwell), with Raymond Massey, Gene Lockhart, and Ruth Gordon; and "Wilson" (1944, Henry King), with Alexander Knox.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Feb. 3 at 2:30: "Personal Services" (1987, directed by Terry Jones), with Julie Walters and Alec McCowen. . . . ¶ Feb. 3 at 6: "Sugarbaby" (1985, Percy Adlon; in German). . . . ¶ Feb. 3 at 6:15: "Tales of a Forgotten Future, Parts 1-4" (1982). Directed by Lewis Klahr, who will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 2:30: "Licence to Kill" (1989, John Glen), with Timothy Dalton. . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 6: "The Devil and Daniel Webster" (1941, William Dieterle), with Walter Huston, Edward Arnold, and Anne Shirley. . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 2:30 and 6: "Burn!" (†). . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 3 and 6: "H2 Worker" (1990, Stephanie Black), a documentary. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 2:30 and Feb. 8 at 2: Paul Terry's "Aesop's Film Fables" (1922-24). . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 6 and Feb. 8 at 5: "Goodbye, Columbus" (1969, Larry Peerce), with Richard Benjamin, Ali MacGraw, and Jack Klugman. . . . ¶ Feb. 8-9 at 2:30 and 5 and Feb. 11 at 3 and 6: Six different programs of short films from Latin America. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 2 and Feb. 11 at 6: "Pigeons" (†). . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 5 and Feb. 11 at 2:30: "Stairway to Heaven" (1946, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger), with David Niven, Kim Hunter, Raymond Massey, and Roger Livesey.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Feb. 3 at 2 and 9: "Scarface" (1932, Howard Hawks), with Paul Muni. . . . ¶ Feb. 3 at 4 and 6:30 and Feb. 4 at 8:15: "La Salamandre" (1971, Alain Tanner; in French). . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 2, Feb. 5 at 4:15, and Feb. 6 at 4:30: "Hard to Handle" (1933, Mervyn LeRoy), with James Cagney and Mary Brian. . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 3:45 and 6 and Feb. 5 at 2: "Le Retour d'Afrique" (1973, Tanner; in French). . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 6, Feb. 6 at 2, and Feb. 9 at 4:15: "The Grapes of Wrath" (1940, John Ford), with Henry Fonda, Jane Darwell, John Carradine, and Charley Grapewin. . . . ¶Feb. 5 at 8:30, Feb. 7 at 2, and Feb. 8 at 8: "Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000" (1976, Tanner; in French), with Jean-Luc Bideau. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 4:15 and Feb. 9 at 2 and 9:15: "The Middle of the World" (1975, Tanner; in French). . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 6:30, Feb. 8 at 3:45, Feb. 9 at 6:45, Feb. 10 at 8:45, Feb. 11 at 6, and Feb. 12 at 2: "The Restless Conscience: Resistance to Hitler Within Germany 1933-1944" (1991, Hava Kohav Beller). . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 9:30 and Feb. 8 at 2, 6:15, and 10:15: Cartoons of the Depression era. . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 2 and Feb. 11 at 4:15 and 8:30: "Sullivan's Travels" (1941, Preston Sturges), with Veronica Lake and Joel McCrea. . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 3:45 and 6:15 and Feb. 11 at 2: "Messidor" (1979, Tanner; in French).

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 783-6501)—Feb. 8 at 2: "Ossessione" (1942, Luchino Visconti; in Italian), with Carla Calamai and Massimo Girotti. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 2: "The Innocent" (1976, Visconti; in Italian), with Giancarlo Giannini, Laura Antonelli, and Jennifer O'Neill.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A Dennis Potter retrospective. Feb. 6 at 5:30, Feb. 7 at 6, and Feb. 8-9 at 2:30: "Follow the Yellow Brick Road" (1972, BBC), with Denholm Elliott, Billie Whitelaw, Michele Dotrice, and Dennis Waterman; and "Double Dare" (1976, BBC), with Alan Dobie and Kika Markham.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Feb. 8 at 2: "Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One" (1967, William Greaves), with Patricia Ree Gilbert. Mr. Greaves will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 4:30: "To Sleep in Anger" (1990, Charles Burnett), with Danny Glover. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 2: "A Rage in Harlem" (1991, Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Robin Givens, and Glover. . . . ¶ Feb.

9 at 4:30: "New Jack City" (1991, Mario Van Peebles), with Wesley Snipes, Ice-T, Judd Nelson, and Van Peebles.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 5 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "The Earrings of Madame de . . ." (1953, Max Ophuls; in French), with Charles Boyer, Danielle Darrieux, and Vittorio De Sica. . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Uranus" (Claude Berri, in French), with Jean-Pierre Marielle, Philippe Noiret, Michel Blanc, Gérard Desarthe, Gérard Depardieu, and Daniel Prevost.

Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium, 42nd St. at First Ave.—Feb. 7 at 6:30: "Tales of Jiro" (1955, Hiroshi Shimizu; in Japanese) and "Mr. Shosuke Ohara" (1949, Shimizu; in Japanese). (For information about tickets, call 752-0824.)

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Feb. 4 at noon: "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" (1949, Tay Garnett), with Bing Crosby. . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at noon: "Knights of the Round Table" (see page 23).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"La Indirecta Directa: Two Decades of Chicano and Puerto Rican Film and Video": Feb. 4 at 2 and Feb. 5-9 at noon: "Cristina Pagán" (1982, Pablo Figueroa; in Spanish) and "Distant Water" (1990, Carlos Avila; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 4 and Feb. 5-9 at 2: "Los Sures" (1983, Diego Echeverria; in English and Spanish) and "La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead" (1989, Lourdes Portillo and Susana Muñoz; in English and Spanish).

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (873-3400)—Feb. 6 at 6:30: "Mrs. Miniver" (1942, William Wyler), with Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

At Play in the Fields of the Lord—Hector Babenco's film, which is based on Peter Matthiessen's 1965 novel of the same name, feels lifeless right from the start, and it perks up only occasionally in the course of the three hours and ten minutes it takes to tell its story. The movie is set in the Amazon basin, and it's about the destruction of an Indian tribe by a combination of capitalist greed (in the form of the local authorities) and cultural insensitivity (in the form of Protestant missionaries from America). The dramatic conflicts aren't very complex, and most of the characters are one-dimensional, instantly readable. Yet Babenco treats every scene as if it contained infinite riches: he draws out simple actions, reiterates obvious ideas, lingers on the faces of characters who have no more secrets to yield up. Among the actors—a high-powered group that includes John Lithgow, Tom Berenger, Kathy Bates, and Daryl Hannah—only Aidan Quinn, as a young missionary who learns to respect the Indians' culture, comes through at all. The effort that Babenco and his actors have put into dramatizing this material is heartbreakingly apparent, yet, no matter how hard they work, the scenes refuse to play, and the movie never manages to generate any real momentum. It's an honest, well-intentioned flop. Screenplay by Babenco and Jean-Claude Carrière.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/16/91.) (Beekman, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

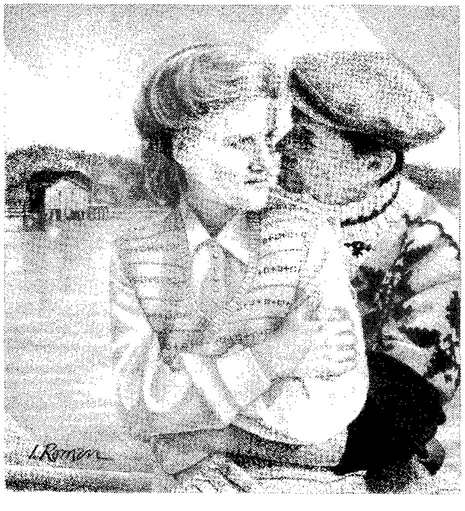
Beauty and the Beast—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi,' from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantel clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Guild. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema. Matinées only.)

Black Robe—An unusual and absorbing new film about North American Indians and a French Jesuit missionary in the early seventeenth century. It's a culture-clash drama in which the most important conflicts take place in the realm of the spirit. The main characters are an excruciatingly pious young priest called Father Laforgue (Lothaire Bluteau) and an Algonquian chief named Chomina (August Schellenberg). Their world views are so radically opposed that at times the two men seem unable to acknowledge each other as human. The screenwriter, Brian Moore, and the director, Bruce Beresford, show extraordinary respect for the stubborn, almost impenetrable otherness of their historical characters. The film is an adventure story in the truest sense: the filmmakers lead us into unknown territory, and keep pushing us farther and farther on, until, by the end, we find ourselves deep in the wilderness of the seventeenth-century consciousness. Bluteau's performance is enervated, but the script is superbly intelligent, the direction is confident, and Schellenberg's Chomina is magnificent. The picture moves on a steady, powerful flow of ideas and emotions, and it stirs in us a sense of discovery. Based on Moore's 1985 novel of the same name. Also with Aden Young, Sandrine Holt, and Tantoo Cardinal. Cinematography by Peter James.—T.R. (11/18/91) (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Bugsy—This opulent period gangster movie, written by James Toback and directed by Barry Levinson, is largely a showcase for the old-fashioned star magnetism of Warren Beatty, who plays the legendary Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel. The screenplay portrays Bugsy as a charming, mercurial psychopath with a rather touching taste for glamour; it concentrates on the last few years of the hero's life, when he became a Hollywood celebrity and built the first hotel-casino in Las Vegas. He's a vivid, unpredictable, one-of-a-kind guy, and the filmmakers seem to realize that they can't take their eyes off him for a second. Siegel is a fascinating monster; we don't want to take our eyes off him, either. This is a rich role for Beatty, and he tears into it hungrily. It's the best kind of star performance: Beatty seems entirely himself, but in a new way. He's ferociously, mesmerizingly funny. Annette Bening plays Bugsy's lover, the tough, wily, independent-minded mob courtesan Virginia Hill, and she more than holds her own in her scenes with the star. And the movie is filled with pungent, memorable supporting performances. Ben Kingsley brings a surprisingly dry, elegant sense of comic timing to his portrait of sober Meyer Lansky (one of the hero's partners in the New York mob). Harvey Keitel, as Mickey Cohen, Bugsy's right-hand man in Los Angeles, spits out his profane lines as if they were live firecrackers. Elliott Gould plays the tiny role of Harry Greenberg, an aging, flabby mob schlemiel, and he's absolutely inspired; he plays this dazed character as a Willy Loman who has wandered too far from the old territory. Despite its lavish surface, this is essentially a movie of small, lovingly crafted pleasures. It's smart, swanky fun.—T.R. (12/30/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Burn! (1970)—Gillo Pontecorvo's luxuriant, ecstatic epic about a mid-nineteenth-century slave uprising on a fictitious Spanish-speaking Caribbean island is told from a neo-Marxist, Frantz Fanonian point of view. It is an attempt to plant an insurrectionary fuse within a swashbuckler—to use a popular costume-adventure form to arouse black revolutionary passions. Marlon Brando plays a British agent provocateur who instigates the revolt and then cynically crushes it; he personifies colonial manipulative policies as well as, by implication, the American involvement in Vietnam. As Pontecorvo demonstrated in "The Battle of Algiers," he has a true gift for epic filmmaking: he can keep masses of people in movement so we care about them. And here, in his feeling for crowds and battles, for color and images, and for visual rhythms, he's a sensuous, intoxicating director. When blacks ride white horses that prance to what sounds like a syncopated Gregorian chant, the sequence is so shimmering and showy that one knows Pontecorvo and his cinematographer, Marcello Gatti, and his composer, Ennio Morricone, couldn't resist it. "Burn!" is politically schematic, and almost every line of dialogue jogs us to fit it into a deterministic theory of history, yet the film is large-spirited, and it might have reached a much wider audience if the Spanish government, sensitive about Spaniards being cast as heavies, hadn't applied economic pressure against the producing company, United Artists. Executives at U.A. remembered the huge losses suffered by Columbia when the Spanish government boycotted Columbia pictures because of its displeasure over "Behold a Pale Horse," so parts of this picture were deleted and others reshot, and the Spaniards, who had traditionally dominated the Antilles, were replaced by the Portuguese, who hadn't but aren't a big movie market. After these delays the picture was given a nervous, halfhearted release. Written by Pontecorvo, Franco Solinas, and Georgio Arlorio; production design by Piero Gherardi. With Evaristo Marquez as the black leader, and Renato Salvatori as the mulatto puppet. Shot partly in the Colombian seaport of Cartagena.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 6.)

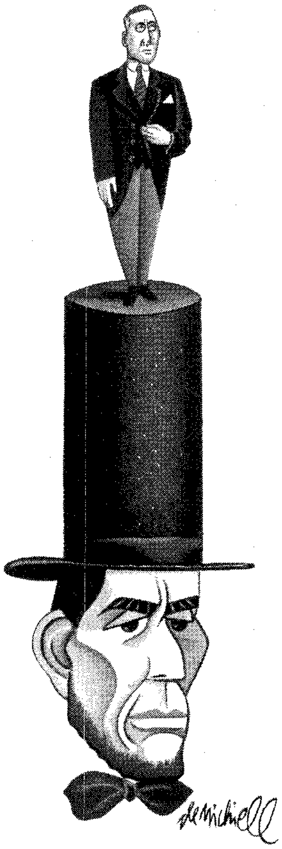
Cape Fear—Martin Scorsese's new film is a remake of a bluntly effective 1962 thriller about a middle-class family—husband, wife, teen-age daughter—who are terrorized by a devious, implacable psychopath. The original (which was based on a pulp novel by John D. MacDonald and directed by J. Lee Thompson) had the straight-ahead construction of a horror movie, and it never pretended that what it was doing was good for us. The remake muddies the waters with self-consciousness: Scorsese and the screenwriter, Wesley Strick, have loaded the movie



At Lincoln Plaza, Barbara Sukowa and Sam Shepard in "Voyager" with apparent moral ambiguities, facile ideas about guilt and redemption, and explicit attempts to portray the scuzzy villain as a mythic nemesis. This picture is much flashier and more assaultive than the original. But the Christian/mythological subtext that Scorsese dredges up and places in the foreground has the effect of increasing our emotional distance from the story. Besides, it isn't true subtext; it's stuff that has been imposed on, rather than discovered in, the material. This is still, at heart, a picture whose sole aim is to give its audience huge, bowel-loosening shocks. It's Scorsese's worst picture—an ugly, incoherent piece of work. With Robert De Niro (frenetic but thoroughly uninteresting as the villain), Nick Nolte, Jessica Lange, Juliette Lewis, and Illeana Douglas. Joe Don Baker, playing the small part of a private detective, gives the liveliest performance. The stars of the 1962 version, Robert Mitchum and Gregory Peck, make brief appearances, and the score is a reorchestration of Bernard Herrmann's original music.—T.R. (12/2/91) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and National Twin.)

Europa Europa—This superb film by the Polish director Agnieszka Holland is based on the memoirs of Salomon Perel, a German Jew who spent much of the Second World War passing for Aryan in an élite Hitler Youth academy. The movie dramatizes this almost inconceivable survival story with a surprisingly light touch. It bounds from one jaw-dropping episode to the next with the speed and the unnerving neutrality of a picaresque adventure, and never pauses to judge its ambiguous hero; it's content to let the ironies of his situation collect around him like reflections in dressing-room mirrors. His family's flight from the Nazis begins in 1938, on the eve of his bar mitzvah. Solly (played by a remarkable young actor, Marco Hofschneider) lands first in Lodz, Poland, and then in the Soviet Union, where he becomes a star pupil in a Communist school. After the Wehrmacht invades Russia and takes him prisoner, he reincarnates himself as an orphaned "pure" German, an Aryan child wandering in the barbaric eastern wilderness. We remain, however, constantly aware (as he is) of what his Nazi disguise conceals—his circumcised penis, the irreversible and unambiguous sign of his identity as a Jew. Holland uses this physical evidence of Solly's Jewishness as the fulcrum of the movie's delicately balanced narrative and moral tensions. In German and Russian.—T.R. (7/1/91) (Quad Cinema.)

The Exile (1947)—The title is all too apropos: Max Ophuls had many sad days in Hollywood, and this piece of costume theatrics, set in the period just before the reign of Charles II, filled a number of them. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., was the producer, the writer, and the gymnastic star, and Maria Montez, Paule Croset, Henry Daniell, Robert Coote, and Nigel Bruce are in the cast. The cinematographer, Franz Planer, had worked with Ophuls in happier times. From the novel "His Majesty, the King," by Cosmo Hamilton.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 6.)



At Theatre 80 St. Marks, Alexander Knox as "Wilson" and Raymond Massey as "Abe Lincoln in Illinois"

Father of the Bride—This scene-by-scene remake, with Steve Martin in the Spencer Tracy role of the father racking up debts to give his daughter a big marital sendoff, is less credible and crunchy than the 1950 Vincente Minnelli production. The story was always just a mildly satirical ode to middle-class patriarchy and the idea of Daddy's Little Girl (Elizabeth Taylor then, Kimberly Williams now). But Minnelli knew how to use Tracy's weathered mug and stout, combative stance to get laughs and to suggest real experience. The old movie has a plush-covered deadpan. The Disney/Touchstone update, by the team of Charles Shyer and Nancy Meyers (he directs, they co-wrote), is sappier and sillier. Martin doesn't only play straight, he plays square. (For those who loved him in "Parenthood," here's "Daddyhood.") He turns into a scowler, while Diane Keaton, as his wife, is a beamer. She switches from high beams to low beams, and sometimes gets stuck in between. The Shyer/Meyers additions explain or fudge the retro material: Martin is a conservative sneaker manufacturer who brags that his town hasn't changed in twenty-five years; Williams shoots hoops and vows that she won't become a fifties housewife. Still, the movie peddles expensive nostalgia. Martin Short is surprisingly wearisome as a wedding coordinator.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Gramercy, Sutton, Olympia, and Embassy. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through Feb. 6.)

The Fisher King—This hundred-and-thirty-seven-minute endurance test is the story of a former New York City "shock jock" (Jeff Bridges) who befriends a schizoid former medievalist (Robin Williams) and joins his quest for the Holy Grail. The gonzo filigree of the director, Terry Gilliam, surrounds this fable of redemption with pseudo-originality. The allusion-mongering of the writer, Richard LaGravenese, gives it delusions of grandeur. At heart, the film is no different from a whole string of Hollywood movies centering on mysterious madmen who may be legendary heroes. As usual for this drippy kind of film, Williams' throwback character, Parry—short for Parsifal—is supposed to inspire everybody with his virtuous whimsies. But Gilliam doesn't know how to give the fantasy any sentimental charm, and he's hell on the actors, including Mercedes Ruehl as Bridges' earthy lover and Amanda Plummer as Williams' gawky amorous ideal. They mug; Gilliam takes mug shots. The movie is a peculiarly irritating failure—a leaden piece of uplift.—M.S. (Eastside Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Freejack—This time-hopping and time-wasting adventure stars Emilio Estevez as a race-car driver and Mick Jagger as the high-tech body snatcher who plucks Estevez out of a car wreck and sends him eighteen years into the future. The supposedly brain-dead Estevez is meant to supply the host body for the mind of an aging oligarch. Instead, Estevez regains consciousness and becomes a "freejack," pursued by Jagger's bounty hunters and a megacorporation belonging to Anthony Hopkins. There's no imaginative skulduggery. The action is rooted in executive-suite chicanery involving Hopkins' favorite employee, Rene Russo, who happens to be the racer's former lover, and Hopkins' second-in-command (Jonathan Banks). Robert Sheckley's source novel, "Immortality, Inc.," is just an amusing futuristic farrago, but at least it runs the gamut of afterlife theories. The script (by Steven Pressfield, Ronald Shusett, and Dan Gilroy) does little more than make Estevez run the gauntlet. The director, Geoff Murphy ("Utu"), tries to enliven the film with broad supporting caricatures, including David Johansen as Estevez's slimy manager and Amanda Plummer as a foul-talking sister—a literal blue nun. Jagger provides the only real kick. He delivers two prime pieces of sarcasm with stunning naturalness, as if he'd thought of them himself. Given the rest of the dialogue, he probably did.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; through Feb. 6.)

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle—This vengeful-nanny thriller has a catchy ad campaign: "Trust is her weapon. Innocence her opportunity. Revenge her only desire." The filmmakers, too, go after the trusting and innocent, but their desire is to make a killing at the box office. The twenty-eight-year-old screenwriter, Amanda Silver, spells out everything as if for the intelligence-impaired. Annabella Sciorra plays Claire, a devoted wife, mother, and, yes, botanist who blows the whistle on a lascivious gynecologist, catalyzing his suicide. Rebecca De Mornay is Peyton, the bad doctor's widow, who loses her own child and lies her way into Claire's nursery. And Ernie Hudson is the heroic, mentally challenged handyman who is wise with children: his name, of course, is Solomon. (Claire's husband, Michael, played by Matt McCoy, is a nonentity.) The director, Curtis Hanson, made two sharp, original suspense movies, "The Bedroom Window" (which he also wrote) and "Bad Influence," and scripted a third, "The Silent Partner." Here, Silver supplies the control board and Hanson just pushes the buttons. With its banal, docile household threatened by an enemy within., the film is like "The Stepfather" without wit or irony. De Mornay's Peyton gets off one campy verbal swipe at Solomon that's sure to be a favorite at high-school study halls, but Julianne Moore, as Michael's first love and Claire's friend, gives the performance of the movie. She's coiled and out there, like an exposed spring. She's also funny; she makes spikiness likable.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through Feb. 6.)

Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse—Fax Bahr and George Hickenlooper directed this engulfing, brilliantly crafted documentary about the disaster-strewn production of Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now." But much of the credit should go to Eleanor Coppola, Francis's wife, who shot sixty hours of behind-the-scenes footage on location in the Philippines, caught her husband's haywire visionary mood swings on audiotape, and, in addition to joining the ranks of the interviewees, reads portions of her journal, "Notes." Her camerawork and prose have an unadorned limpidity. They provide refreshing counterpoint to the grandiose rhetoric of her husband's attempt to relocate Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" in a Vietnam War adventure story. Bahr and Hickenlooper present the extraordinary spectacle of a filmmaker at the peak of his clout, banking everything on his ability to pull inspiration out of the fire, and getting scorched. While enduring the dismissal of one lead actor, the heart attack of his replacement, a ruinous typhoon, and a constant struggle with the script, Coppola keeps insisting that his experiences will enrich his movie. Bahr and Hickenlooper support Coppola's point of view. Their film is less important for its debatable conclusion (that Coppola achieved artistic success) than for its depiction of the delusionary power of filmmaking. This movie, not "Apocalypse Now," is about what happened to Coppola in the jungle, and here he becomes a spellbinding tragic hero.—M.S. (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through Feb. 6.)

High Heels—Directed by Pedro Almodóvar. In Spanish. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, and Lincoln Plaza.)

Hook—Steven Spielberg's film means to give a contemporary spin to J. M. Barrie's classic "Peter Pan." The movie is a failure in almost every way, but it's unmistakably of our time: its lack of conviction and its panicky eagerness to please are depressingly up-to-the-minute. The script, by Jim V. Hart and Malia Scotch Marmo, presents Peter Pan as a grown-up American family man named Peter Banning (Robin Williams). Banning, a yuppie corporate lawyer, has no idea that he was ever Peter Pan, and he's so wrapped up in making money that he neglects his wife and kids. The movie contrives to send him back to Neverland, where he rediscovers his former identity and does battle with his old nemesis, Captain Hook (Dustin Hoffman). The filmmakers use up their energy and our patience in scattershot attempts to appeal to every conceivable audience. The whole sorry spectacle turns out to be a kind of self-help fairy tale, an illustrated lecture on finding the inner child. The picture is full of special-effects "magic," but the tricks feel strained; we're constantly aware of the anxiety and the backbreaking effort it's taking to produce them, and that's no kind of magic at all. The movie seems drenched in flop sweat. In this version of "Peter Pan," the imagination feels like a burden—a terrible, crushing obligation. Also with Maggie Smith, Julia Roberts, Bob Hoskins, Dante Basco, Caroline Goodall, Charlie Korsmo, and Amber Scott. The running time is two hours and fifteen minutes.—T.R. (12/30/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, Loews Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center.)

JFK—Oliver Stone's movie means to demonstrate that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not the act of a disturbed Marxist loner named Lee Harvey Oswald but the result of a vast, complex right-wing conspiracy. The screenplay, by Stone and Zachary Sklar, packs an extraordinary amount of assassination lore into three hours and eight minutes; it also includes a ton of speculative material about governmental misconduct, and quite a few invented characters. The movie is a thick gumbo of truths, half-truths, unverifiable hypotheses, and pure rant, and Stone ladles it out indiscriminately. In essence, the conspiracy theory argued here amounts to a series of inferential leaps proceeding from a speculation (that J.F.K. was killed because he wanted to pull out of Vietnam and end the Cold War). It's all bombast and misdirection, like a courtroom summation by a lawyer who knows that he can't win on the evidence. Stone comes on like a fearless radical, but his attitude toward the audience is firmly in the Hollywood tradition: he tries to bypass the intellect and go straight for the gut. The picture plays like an endless episode of "America's Most Wanted." Its hysterical manner and its slipshod handling of the facts actually have the effect of diminishing the credibility of the case for conspiracy. The clearest sounds we hear in this movie are those of Oliver Stone shooting himself in the foot. With Kevin Costner as New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, Sissy Spacek as his wife, Gary Oldman as Oswald, and an all-star cast of witnesses and conspirators: Tommy Lee Jones, Joe Pesci (an abominable performance), Donald Sutherland, Kevin Bacon, Jack Lemmon, Ed Asner, John Candy, Walter Matthau. Garrison himself does a brief turn as Chief Justice Warren.—T.R. (1/13/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews Columbus Circle.)

Let Him Have It—With Tom Courtenay, Eileen Atkins, Clare Holman, Chris Ecclestone, and Paul Reynolds; directed by Peter Medak. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cinema Village 3rd Avenue.)

Life Is Sweet—In this wonderful new comedy, the English writer and director Mike Leigh ("High Hopes") takes us into the domestic life of a lower-middle-class family in Middlesex. The characters are, by conventional standards, ordinary, but they aren't dreary, and their actions aren't predictable; the movie doesn't treat anyone as a type. Wendy (Alison Steadman) is an attractive, ebullient middle-aged woman who's always on the move, always doing something. Her husband, Andy (Jim Broadbent), is an amiable dawdler, a guy who starts ambitious home-improvement projects and never quite gets around to finishing them. They're the parents of a ludicrously mismatched set of twins: Natalie (Claire Skinner), a quiet, serious, dignified girl; and Nicola (Jane Horrocks), who hates her life and responds with snarls and contemptuous epithets to even the most innocuous attempts at conversation. Leigh doesn't give us an obvious narrative hook—a clear sense of what the story is going to be about or what sort of dramatic revelations he might have in store for us. And, despite Nicola's bratty outbursts, the tone is light and casual. Leigh doesn't manipulate our responses; he roughs them up a little, though. By means of a dense texture of tiny behavioral details and disconcerting shifts of style, he attempts to reshuffle our emotions. He prepares us to accept the moments of piercing, almost miraculous clarity that arise, as if by accident, at the end of his best films. In this picture, he builds up to a conversation between Wendy and Nicola that is perhaps the most extraordinary scene in recent movies. Also with Stephen Rea and Timothy Spall.—T.R. (11/4/91) (Quad Cinema. . . .
¶ Carnegie Hall Cinema; through Feb.

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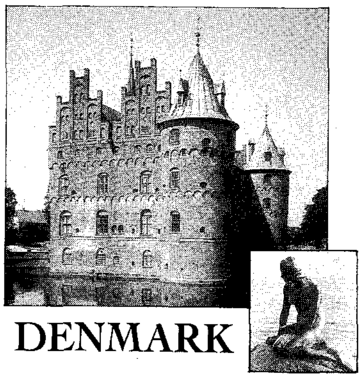

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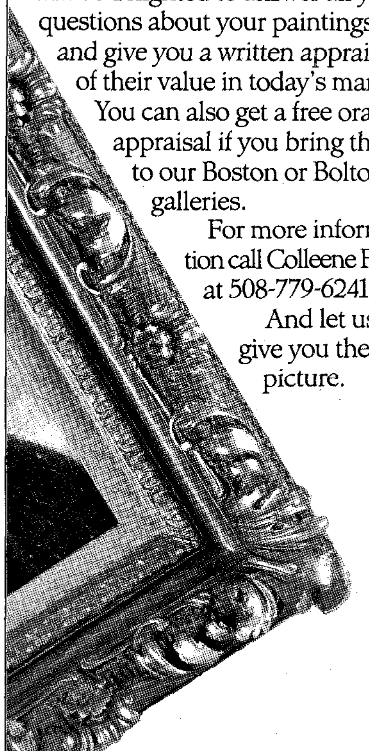


4. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; starting Feb. 5.)

Madame Bovary—Calling writer-director Claude Chabrol's adaptation of the Flaubert classic Masterpiece Theatre-style moviemaking is unfair to Masterpiece Theatre: the BBC mini-series starring Francesca Annis and Tom Conti had more humor, grit, and oomph. This is the Classics Illustrated comic-book version. In two hours and eight minutes, it trots through the central plot, conveying key dialogue, descriptions, and contrasts in linked vignettes and verbal bits that would fit into thought balloons. A narrator captions what the adapter fails to picture or dramatize. Isabelle Huppert is disastrous casting in the title role. Flaubert divulged Emma Bovary's oscillations via her eyes, but Huppert's less-than-divine orbs remain impassive even when she's supposed to be galvanizing. At one point, the narrator emphasizes the "hellish recklessness" and sensuality in Emma's gaze as she tries to compel her lover Leon (Lucas Belvaux) into committing embezzlement. Yet all we see is Huppert glaring at him with mercenary intent. It's as if Chabrol were banking that viewers will disregard the evidence of their own eyes. With Jean-François Balmer as Charles Bovary, Christophe Malavoy as Rodolphe Boulanger, and Jean Yanne as Monsieur Homais. In French.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

My Own Private Idaho—This new feature by the independent filmmaker Gus Van Sant is like an exploded version of his previous films "Mala Noche" and "Drugstore Cowboy," and it scatters meanings all over the landscape. It's a beautiful disaster, like a bomb test in the middle of nowhere. The movie is set primarily in Van Sant's familiar territory—the seedier parts of Portland, Oregon—and its main characters are a pair of young hustlers, Mike (River Phoenix) and Scott (Keanu Reeves), who sell their bodies on the street. Mike is a narcoleptic: every time he blacks out, he has lyrical dreams composed of imagery from his childhood. Scott, who is the son of Portland's mayor, is modelled on Shakespeare's Prince Hal; the Falstaff character here is a scruffy gay cokehead called Bob (William Richert), and his scenes with Scott are stylized variations of incidents from both parts of "Henry IV" (hence also variations on Orson Welles' "Chimes at Midnight"). Van Sant takes a lot of chances, and visually the movie is so imaginative, so fiercely alive, that it carries us along. But when the over-all design of the picture becomes clear, we feel cheated rather than enlightened. Scott turns into a villain; Bob is ennobled as a symbol of outlaw freedom; and Mike takes on the aura of a holy fool, the Prince Myshkin of the Portland meat market. Van Sant's vision is disappointingly trite and schematic. Phoenix, however, gives a remarkably intelligent and intuitive performance.—T.R. (10/7/91) (Angelika Film Center. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; through Feb. 4.)

Naked Lunch—With Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, and Julian Sands; directed by David Cronenberg. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

Pigeons (1971)—It has been said that this movie about an alienated youth turned New York cab-driver improves as it goes along, but who wants to stick around long enough to find out? Static direction by John Dexter. The cast includes Jordan Christopher, Jill O'Hara, Kate Reid, and William Redfield.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 9 and 11.)

The Prince of Tides—Barbra Streisand's film, adapted from Pat Conroy's 1986 novel, is a big, earnest psychoanalytic soap opera. It's a story in which people come to terms with their past, make peace with the demons that have haunted them since childhood, learn how to let go of the "dysfunctional" emotional patterns inflicted on them by their parents, and become sensitive, caring human beings. Streisand treats this banal material affectionately, even reverently, but it plays better on the screen than it does on the page. Her direction is smooth and canny, and she has distilled the novel to its corn-based essence: the film's strong Hollywood brew of pop uplift, soft-focus romance, and middle-class melodrama seems the ideal form for Conroy's story. But the fumes of the novel's terrible ideas linger in the air. After a while, everything begins to feel predictable. Conroy's narrative method (he co-wrote the screenplay, with Becky Johnston) consists of establishing characters who embody common stereotypes, setting them in motion around each other, and then watching them follow the courses that he's mapped for them: his message is one of change and liberation, but his characters' orbits are fixed. As the soul-searching hero, Tom Wingo, Nick Nolte bears the weight of all the movie's ambitions, and, for the most part, he carries his burden with miraculous grace. Streisand plays a sympathetic New York psychiatrist and never seems to get the hang of the role, but most of the cast performs heroically: Blythe Danner, as Tom's wife, and Kate Nelligan, as his mother, are wonderful. This is an admirably scrupulous job of literary adaptation; it's the material that's dysfunctional. Also with Jeroen Krabbé, Jason Gould, Melinda Dillon, Brad Sullivan, and George Carlin. The appalling score is by James Newton Howard.—T.R. (1/27/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Rhapsody in August—These days, people are more interested in Kurosawa than he is in being Kurosawa. With this weak, tepid brew of message movie and family drama, the sensei moves further away than ever from his trademark imagistic energy toward the contemplative style of previous Japanese masters. (Even the title recalls Ozu.) In this tri-generational story, four children vacation with their grandmother (Sachiko Murase) in the country outside Nagasaki while their parents visit a granduncle and his half-American son (Richard Gere), in Hawaii. Kurosawa shows none of Ozu's ability to particularize and intensify domestic happiness and heartbreak. The few memorable shots come when the kids, weaned from television, see nature through the poetry of their grandmother's household lore. When they become obsessed with the Nagasaki A-bomb, which killed their grandfather, everything turns preachy and disingenuous. Gere plays a Yankee who speaks Japanese and empathizes with his Asian relatives. Kurosawa wants to transcend anti-Americanism; the grandmother says that War, not the Bomb, is the problem. But no one raises the question of why wars start. This movie's pacifism is a pacifier. Kurosawa wrote the script, from a novel by Kiyoko Murata; Takao Saito and Masaharu Ueda did the cinematography. In Japanese.—M.S. (Quad Cinema.)

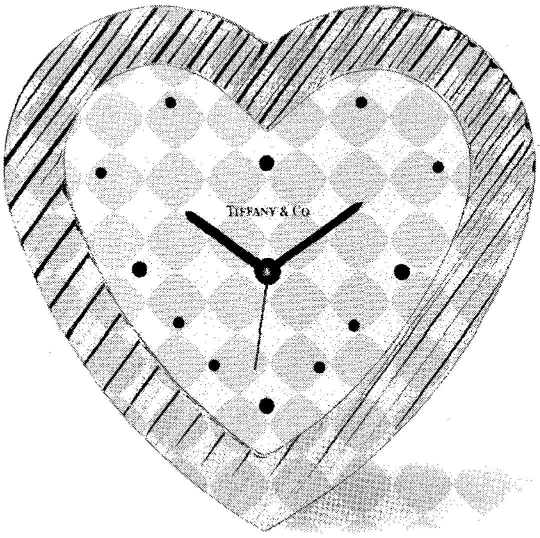
Rocco and His Brothers (1961)—Luchino Visconti's strange sprawling epic—a flamboyant melodrama about how a poor Sicilian family (a mother and her five sons) is corrupted and eventually destroyed by life in Milan. Visconti's methods are still partly neorealist, but the scale of the film is huge and operatic, and it loses the intimacy of the best neorealist films, and their breath of life. This is more like a hollow, spectacular version of a Warners movie of the thirties (three of the sons take turns in the prizefight ring) but the characters aren't as vivid and individualized as the Warners actors made them. The movie is memorable largely because of Annie Girardot's stunning performance as a prostitute; her role suggests that of Dostoyevski's great heroine in "The Idiot," while her final scene suggests "Woyzeck." The weirdest aspect of the film is the casting of Alain Delon (who at times seems to be lighted as if he were Hedy Lamarr) as a saintly, simple Prince Myshkin. Renato Salvatori plays the most forceful of the brothers—it's actually his sexual passion rather than the horrors of urban existence that destroys the family. Also with Katina Paxinou as the mother, and Roger Hanin, Paolo Stoppa, Suzy Delair, and Claudia Cardinale. The script is adapted from the novel "The Bridge of Ghisolfa," by Giovanni Testori; there are also suggestions of the Biblical story of Joseph and his brethren. Cinematography by Giuseppe Rotunno; music by Nino Rota. In Italian.—P.K. (Newman Theatre; through Feb. 6. . . . ¶ Public Theatre; starting Feb. 7.)

Rush—What a misnomer! Based on Kim Wozencraft's autobiographical novel about a Texas male-female narc team who cook evidence in more ways than one, this movie is a stone drag. With Jennifer Jason Leigh and Jason Patric skillfully imitating the ravages of addiction and withdrawal, it's basically an old-fashioned junkie drama. Even though the

"Knights of the Round Table" (playing February 11, at the Donnell Library Center) is a glamorous rendering of the archetypal royal triangle of King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and Sir Lancelot. This 1953 followup to the previous year's smash hit "Ivanhoe" was made by the same M-G-M creative team: Noel Langley, a whiz at adaptation (he also worked on "The Wizard of Oz"); that luminous colorist Freddie Young as cinematographer, nine years before he shot "Lawrence of Arabia"; and action pro Richard Thorpe as director. (Talbot Jennings and Jan Lustig co-wrote the screenplay with Langley; Stephen Dade shares credit for the cinematography.) The result is a haunting movie threnody in a unique Hollywood mode: pop classical. It's "Camelot" without Lerner and Loewe.

In this telescoped variation on Thomas Malory, Arthur (Mel Ferrer) and Lancelot (Robert Taylor) unite to defeat the evil Modred (Stanley Baker) and Morgan Le Fay (Anne Crawford) and to pacify the British frontier. The filmmakers take a rational, temperate approach to the material. Merlin (Felix Aylmer) is mostly just a wise, worldly counsellor, and all of Arthur's knights are God's gifts to civilization. Once Lancelot and Guinevere are thrown together, the film's purity works to its advantage, and the rest flows like a ballad. Lancelot and Guinevere don't consummate their desire, but their guilt and sense of taint are still intense. Taylor is a more manly sufferer than he was in "Camille," Ferrer is appropriately soft-eyed, and Ava Gardner, a dark-haired Guinevere, is both sensual and spiritual, looking as right in a nun's habit as in a low-cut bodice. The look of the film is whimsical and jewelled, with otherworldly shades of sapphire and emerald. The whole movie is a mainstream oddity—an Arthurian legend that, without magic, casts a melancholy spell.

director, Lili Fini Zanuck, cast one of the wiliest actors from "Drugstore Cowboy," Max Perlich, as a dealer-turned-snitch, she didn't learn much from that movie. Zanuck doesn't convey the exhilaration and the jumping adrenaline that hook the protagonists. The movie is all falling action, and we're not even sure where the characters are falling *from*. Novelist-turned-screenwriter Pete Dexter, who did the adaptation, shares the usual Hollywood disdain for "back story." A canny group of actors play the bad guys, and they're better defined than the heroes—the rogues' gallery takes over the midway. It includes Special K McCray, who displays a dazzling, derisive chuckle as a black heroin honcho; William Sadler, who exudes psycho-killer ambience as a pusher of "blue ringers"; and the massive, stoic Gregg Allman, who's potentially ambigious as a racketeer suspected of being the kingpin. Eric Clapton's virtuoso rock score advances the tension and the druggy romance more than the filmmakers or the stars do. The transparent Leigh acts out, the opaque Patric acts in, but these opposites don't attract.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, and Cinema II. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema. Evenings only. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through Feb 6.)



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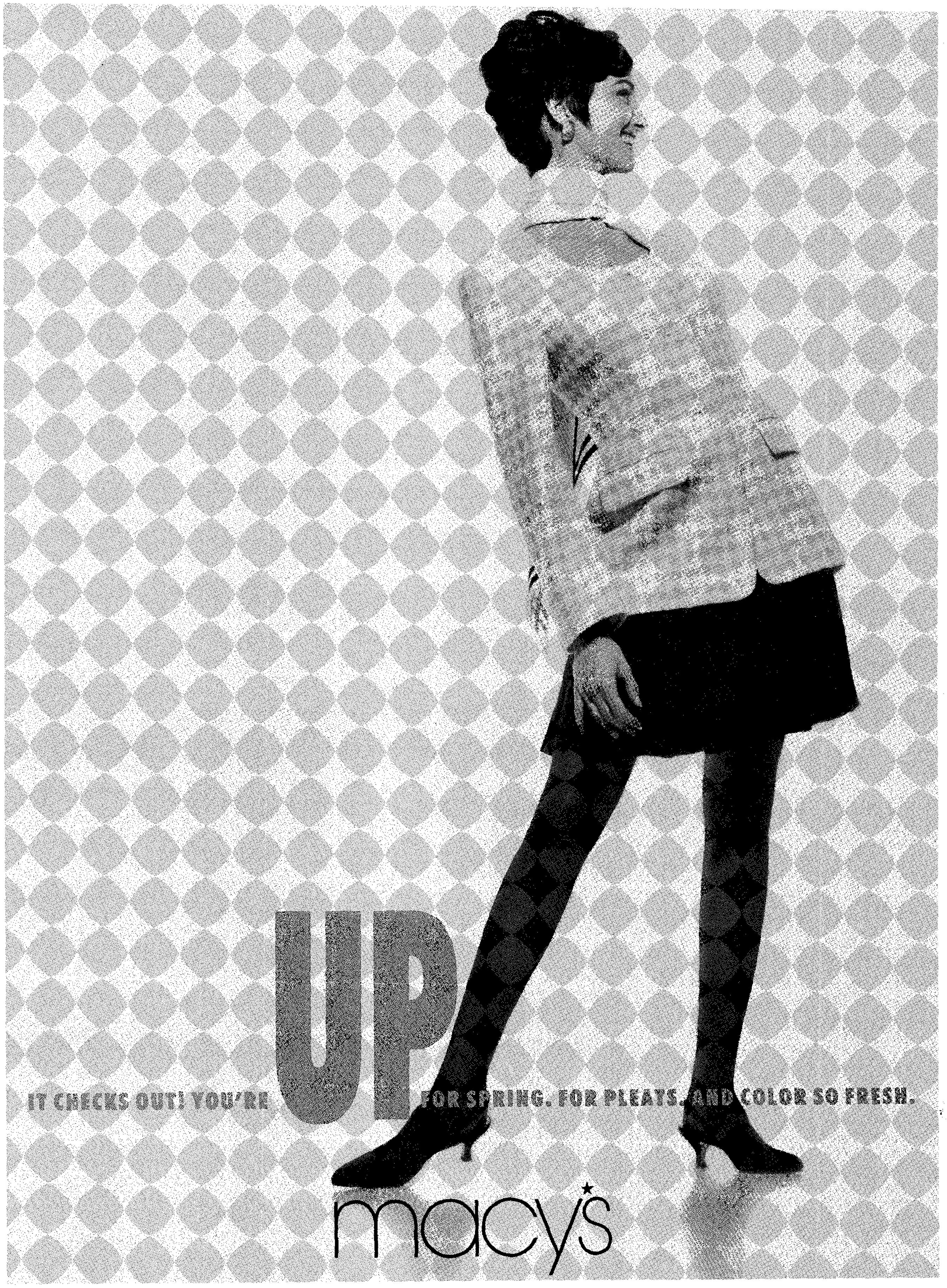
CAROLINA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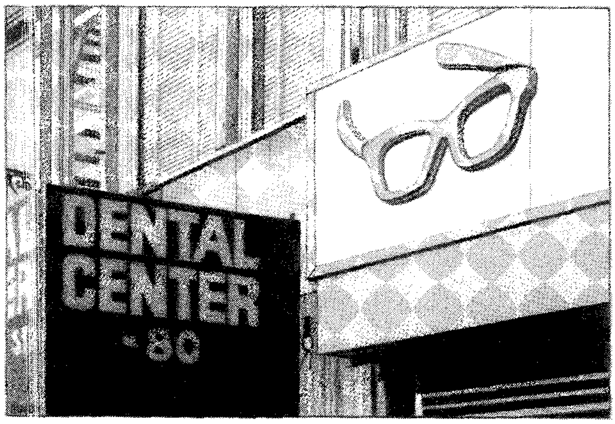
THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

LAST week, as Governor Bill Clinton's predicament took over the airwaves, Americans found themselves in the midst of this country's first wholly abstract political scandal. It was a scandal that had no larger dimension of reference—a scandal that had no significance beyond its ability to perpetuate itself as a scandal. The issue was not sex and character (since the Governor had never really denied that he was the kind of person he was now said to be; that is, someone who had had love affairs in the past but was having them no longer), or sex and security risks (as with Profumo) or sex and potentially illegal harassment (as with Clarence Thomas) or sex and petty corruption (as with Wayne Hays) or sex and susceptibility to blackmail (as with so many). The issue was just sex, and, in a way, sex without even the old taboo against sex. After all, this was taking place in 1992, in an America in which fathers who have committed incest with their daughters go on talk shows with them and discuss it with the studio audience. (A woman who has no story hotter than that she once had a long-term affair with a married man could not get past the door on "Geraldo" or "Oprah.") We have become so casual about sex of all kinds that when, a few years ago, another of the candidates, also a governor, had a love affair with a movie star—an affair carried on in the open, and even in the governor's mansion—it was not only accepted by the public but was seriously put forward as an image-builder, a nice thing to have on one's résumé. In Clinton's case, the allegations of infidelity were not the scandal; they were simply an excuse by means of which a particular kind of media narrative could be set in motion. Once again, television had inflated a non-event into an event, and then instantly posed as the detached, sanctimonious, and even sorrowfully disapproving spectator of the event it had just created.



Back in the forties, *Life* found a way to get cheesecake photographs into its pages—by publishing a photographic essay on a life class in an art school, so that the message was not "Look at the naked model" but "Look at those other guys looking at the naked model." Something like this has now become a given in American journalism. A supermarket tabloid that specializes in celebrity sex pays a lot of money for a story. Then the supposedly responsible major media explore that story by superimposing on it a story about the rights and wrongs of reporting such a story. Suddenly, the story is not merely legitimate but important, and not to examine it becomes a professional failure. At this point, journalistic objectivity becomes mechanical two-sidedness: Ted Koppel looks at Guest One and then at Guest Two, and his head, turning from one side to the other, becomes, so to speak, the engine that continues to propel the story forward.

By now, the details of this kind of event are so thoroughly scripted that you can shut your eyes and work out the rest: the *People* feature on Gennifer Flowers, in which we will find out why she spells her name with a "G"; the *Vanity Fair* psychobiography, in which we will find out what childhood trauma drove an Arkansas politician irresistibly into the arms of a pseudo Miss Teenage America (or, just as likely, find out what childhood trauma drove a pseudo Miss Teenage America to assert that she had been driven into the arms of an Arkansas politician). You can see the cover photograph on Hillary Clinton's how-I-triumphed-over-it best-seller. You can even see the head-shaking, troubled expressions on the faces of the assembled commentators on PBS as, a year or so from now, they try to parse the rights and wrongs, the professional ethics, of a story that has been all but forgotten.

The role that the media have come to play in these abstract, ritualized events—that of the impartial m.c. who keeps the game in motion—is surely not the role the people who wrote the Constitution imagined for a free press. The press they hoped for was not one that aspired to be a referee of the democratic process but one that in its passionate and many-sided engagement with facts and principles could itself *enact* the democratic process. Yet much of the press today has come to see itself as only peripherally engaged with democracy. It is as if the press were like the Post Office—a semi-official arm of government delivering a product, and with no more responsibility for what that product contains than the postman has for what's in the envelope.

Ironic detachment is the natural and not entirely unhealthy consequence of living in a media culture. When there are a thousand competing messages, it's not a bad idea to maintain a certain knowingness, a certain self-consciousness, about the process by which messages are put forward. But the danger of ironic detachment is that it easily becomes cynicism or, worse, uncritical passivity, in which we watch for the sake of watching, waiting for the next scene of a drama whose plot we already know.

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Vanished

A LOT of people seem to come from Port Arthur, Texas—Robert Rauschenberg, Janis Joplin, Johnny Winter, Tex Ritter, just to name some of the best known. Traffic in the other direction must have been mighty sparse. That was our first thought, anyway, when we rolled into downtown Port Arthur recently. It was the middle of a sunny Friday afternoon, and the city was totally deserted. For block after silent, crumbling block, we saw no man, beast, or going concern. The stoplights would have made as much sense blinking in the Sahara. To call downtown Port Arthur depressed would be like calling the surface of the sun warm. Our destination was a former industrial laundry where we had heard that a sculptor named Doug Clark lived and worked. The address turned out to be an oasis, with a great Chinese tallow tree and bright, thriving grass behind an ancient iron fence, and half a dozen people welding and sandblasting and puttering in the shadowy depths of a foundry. Doug Clark himself—an affable, sturdy-shouldered man of about forty—claimed to be happy to show a visitor around. Of the neighborhood he said, "Some people think I'm nuts to be here, but, really, at night it's like being way, way out in the country."

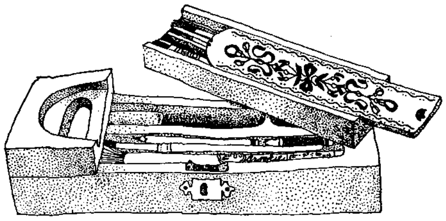
Mr. Clark grew up on a Gulf Coast rice farm, and later had his own rice farm, until a couple of shifts in the Department of Agriculture's attitude toward domestic rice production effectively deeded his farm to the government. "But that's O.K.," he said evenly. "Art is better, ultimately." He usually works on commission, he explained, so he didn't have much finished sculpture around. But he had a lot of pieces in progress, from tiny clay maquettes to monumental bronze figures, ranged like preoccupied hosts along the route of our tour through the foundry.

It would be an exaggeration to say that we understood everything Mr. Clark told us about wax molds, crucibles, sprues, sand, and the mineralogical qualities of bronze. But we did begin to grasp some of the economics of making art in Port Arthur after he mentioned that he had bought a pleasant, four-bedroom house near downtown for forty-five hundred dollars. He wasn't able yet to earn a living from his sculpture, he said, and still had to work for a local shipyard. But the shipyard's owner, as luck would have it, liked his work and had become his patron, and that had freed him to spend most of his time sculpting. And the commissions were rolling in. His big project of the moment was a nineteen-foot alligator for the local Museum of the Gulf Coast. It was supposed to be a replica of the largest Gulf Coast gator on record. Mr. Clark had somebody out looking for models, and as we were finishing our tour that person appeared. It was Patrick Lowry, Mr. Clark's foundryman, back from his researches. He'd found an alligator farm that was perfect, he said. There were lots of live gators, and a sixteen-foot stuffed gator with a ten-point buck in his mouth. Mr. Clark's eyes glittered.

To see the Janis Joplin Memorial, one of Mr. Clark's more celebrated pieces, we had to go over to the Port Arthur public library. Riding through the city in his van, we were stunned again by Port Arthur's emptiness. A few public buildings—a school, the library—stood surrounded by acres of space. The buildings looked like restored ruins from a vanished civilization. Some downtown blocks were still covered with abandoned buildings or rubble—Mr. Clark pointed out a large commercial building in fairly good condition and said, "They'd be happy to get ten thousand dollars for that"—but other blocks looked like pristine parkland. There wasn't even any litter. "Nothing to throw away, and nobody to throw it," Mr. Clark said. The Janis Joplin Memorial turned out to be a group of five busts of the singer; in the largest, she is belting her lungs out, head thrown back, microphone in hand. Her husk of a home town, we thought, was like the remains of some world-ending binge.

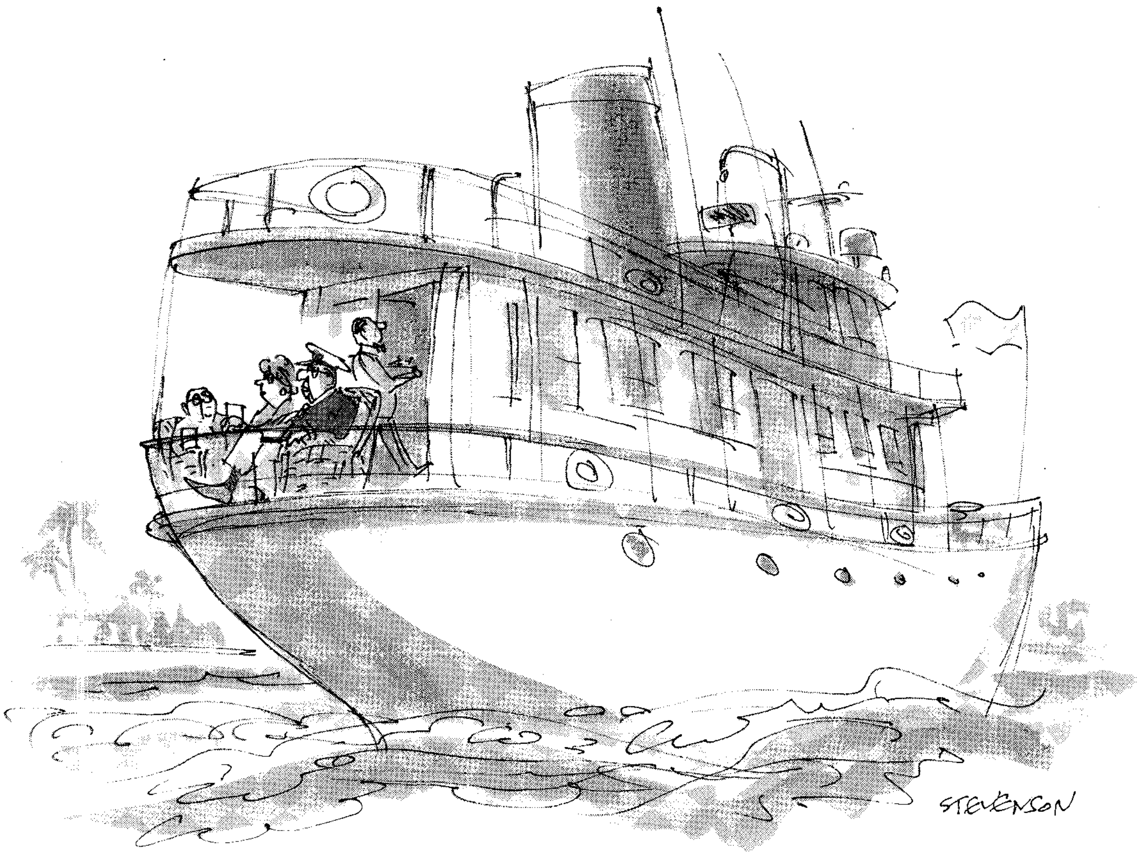
What happened? White flight from school integration. The crash of the oil business. A major blow, Mr. Clark said, came with the election of a Baptist sheriff, who shut down one of the city's few flourishing industries: a red-light district that catered to sailors and roughnecks and oilmen. Mr. Clark offered to show us Sabine Pass, a small town south of Port Arthur. We drove through a ramshackle neighborhood, and then through a vast oil refinery, and then through wide salt marshes, where egrets perched on fence posts. At Sabine Pass, we found a fleet of shrimp boats—nearly all of them now owned by Vietnamese, Mr. Clark said—and a regiment of offshore oil rigs, standing mothballed in the shallows of the Sabine River. Looking up at the silent, rusting rigs from the riverbank, we felt as if we had wandered into a graveyard for sci-fi monsters. The rigs were gargantuan. They are also fantastically expensive, Mr. Clark told us. And when there was no immediate prospect of their operating profitably their owners often had them cut up for scrap. "Which is what a lot of them are doing right now," he added.

We wanted a postcard. Mr. Clark thought awhile, then drove us back to Port Arthur and deposited us before what he said was probably the only cache of picture postcards still locally available. It was a revolving rack full of small, stiff, yellowing cards showing a sunny, sleepy, well-built city prowled by dark-green Chevrolets. The cards were being sold by a tall, slim Vietnamese man with a graying ponytail, who sat behind a counter smoking a cigarette through a holder. His shop was huge, dusty, and bare. On long pea-green shelves single copies of pornographic magazines were placed every few feet, their covers curling. We bought postcards showing the library,



the high school, and three laughing women on water skis.

There was one more thing we had to see, Mr. Clark said: the Pompeiian Villa, the pride of the Port Arthur Historical Society. Built in 1900 by a barbed-wire tycoon from Illinois, the villa is a careful copy of a typical pre-cataclysm Pompeiian home. It has eleven rooms, which form a U around a three-sided courtyard, or peristyle. Mary Crowder, an exuberant woman in her early sixties, was on hand to show us around. The barbed-wire tycoon had brought his wife down from Illinois, Ms. Crowder told us, but when they arrived she refused to get out of her carriage. "She refused *twice*," Ms. Crowder said. "She was afraid of mosquitoes. So she never set foot in the house, and her husband turned it into a hunting lodge." We were invited to admire paintings, chandeliers, an eighteenth-century diamond-dust mirror, a Hepplewhite chest of drawers, and a magnificent old Scottish piano. The single most valuable furnishing in the villa, Ms. Crowder said, was the antique Kashan rug in the living room. "Supposedly, it has a flaw," she said. "So that's what we do on rainy days: look for the flaw."



"Unfortunately, I left the middle class before the middle class got to be so important."

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Murphys

ROBERT MEYERS, the founder of the Murphy Bed Center of New York, Inc., on West Seventeenth Street, spends most of his day in the field. He may be at the site of the new Flatotel on West Fifty-second Street, supervising the installation of dozens of Murphy beds. Or he may be at Tudor City or the Parc Vendôme, both of which were built at the peak of the Murphy-bed craze, in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, and contain lots of antique jalopies that few people besides Robert can understand. Robert wears a beeper, so that his wife, Susanne, can contact him in the event of a Murphy-related emergency. "A lot of my job is just talking clients through their beds," Robert says. "They don't understand their beds, or they're actually afraid of them, because of the stigma these things have got from Hollywood." When Robert is explaining a Murphy bed to a client, he resembles a flight instructor coaxing a novice through his first landing. He looks the client directly in the eye, enunciates carefully, as though speaking for lip-readers, and measures out instructions with his hands. Not one of Robert's customers has been trapped or clobbered by the product. In fact, he has only ever heard of one such incident—an eighty-year-old woman in England was stuck inside her bed for three days.

The Murphy Bed Center is in a small second-story loft just west of Sixth Avenue. Half the space is devoted to furniture that is not what it seems to be—dressers, desks, cabinets, and walls of shelving that turn into beds. The other half, behind a door marked "Employees Only," is where Robert and Susanne spend their spare time. Their couch is an ordinary bifold Murphy, the Model T of the industry. On Long Island, where they go on weekends, they sleep in a bookcase-type Murphy, which is more upscale. On their showroom floor are some top-of-the-line Murphys—German Murphys, which work with pistons, and Italian Murphys, which Robert greatly admires. "The Italians have mechanisms where you go, 'Whoa, I can't believe this is happening,'" Robert said the other day, showing off an Italian model. "Watch how the legs fold out. Wild, huh?" Nearby was a filing cabinet that turned into an ironing board. "I just had to have this on the floor," he explained. "Basically, anything that can pop out of something, I enjoy."

Robert is in his early thirties. He has neatly groomed shoulder-length hair and the physique of a person with a high metabolism. He likes to wear jewelry, but he has found that thrusting his hands into the guts of Murphy beds ruins watches and bracelets, and so now he wears eight three-inch rubber gaskets on his left wrist and, as a wedding band, one three-quarter-inch gasket on his left ring finger. (He wears his real wedding ring on his right hand, surrounded by more gaskets). Robert started out in the furniture-moving business. In an effort to establish a niche for himself, he began to take apart and reassemble installations—cabinetry, bookshelves, entertainment centers—and in this way he became familiar with the anatomies of Murphy beds. The ingenuity, delicacy, and precision of the mechanisms appealed to his mechanical side. “I began telling people that if they needed the Murphy beds worked on, call me,” he says. “I found out which apartment buildings had the old Murphy beds, and I’d leave my card with the doorman. Pretty soon, I became Number One in the field.”

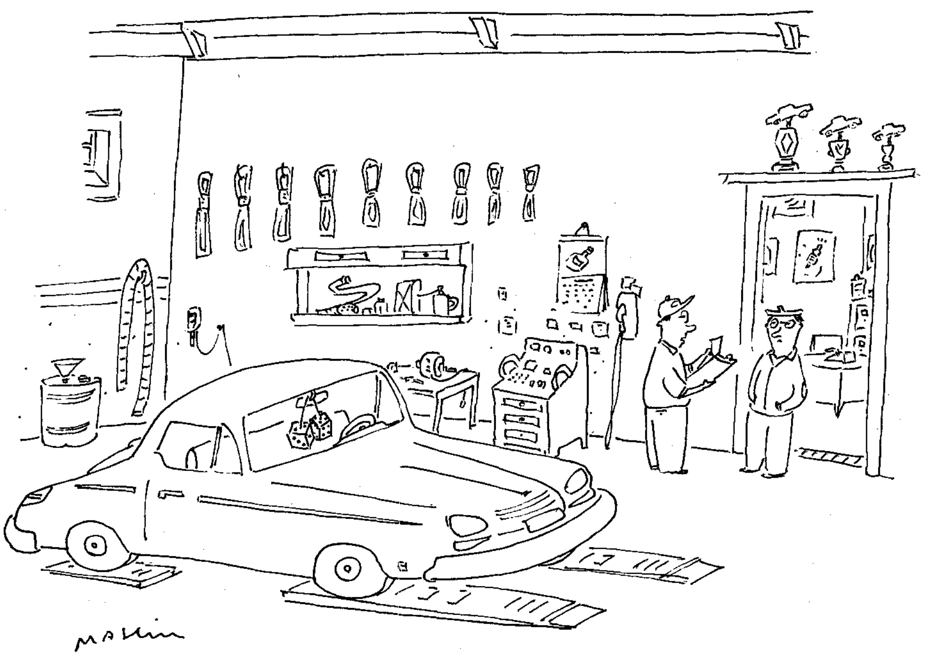
Occasionally, in older apartment buildings, Robert comes across an original Murphy In-A-Dor Bed, designed by William L. Murphy himself. Murphy was a colorful northern Californian who broke horses, drove a stagecoach, served as a sheriff, and, around 1900, had the idea of making a bed that folded out of a closet. “Basically, the idea had been around since the drawbridge,” Robert says. “But Murphy got the patent on it.” Someone in the movie business in Los Angeles perceived its slapstick possibilities, and Murphy’s beds quickly became popular props in silent comedies. In the nineteen-twenties, Murphy was selling several thousand beds a month. In the thirties, he expanded into Murphy Cabrinettes—tiny, Pullman-style kitchens. These, together with the beds, were incorporated by developers into efficiency apartments, which were then a brand-new concept. Dale Carnegie wrote articles about Murphy. In Europe, Murphy was viewed as a kind of urban visionary.

The Murphy-bed business isn’t what it used to be. After the war, the popularity of the beds began to decline. People didn’t want to save space—they wanted to sleep in huge beds in big suburban bedrooms. Also, the sofa bed, popularized in the late forties by Bernard Castro, eroded Murphy’s market. Robert is contemptuous of sofa beds. “It’s such a misconception when people say that they don’t want a Murphy bed because they want to sleep on a real bed,” he says. “They say that because they’re coming off sofa beds. There is just no comparison between a sofa bed and a Murphy.”

Two years ago, Robert made a proposal to the Murphy Bed Company, which has its headquarters in Commack, Long Island, and is still entirely owned by the Murphy family; the president, Clark Murphy, is William’s grandson. “Look,” Robert said to the Murphy Bed people. “I think your bed needs some of my personal attention and focus. Because if you promoted these things aggressively they’d sell like crazy—you have a fabulous product here. I am offering to be your exclusive sales representative in Manhattan.” The company turned Robert down. So he decided to start the Murphy Bed Center. “My thing is, How far can I get into this without being afraid of how far I can go?” he said, and then he raised his arms and widened his eyes. “I see a bed coming down from the ceiling, with four winches, one at each corner, slowly lowering it.” He let his fingers float slowly down to his waist. Business was good, he added, and he was selling mechanisms as far away as Alaska. “In Alaska, space is a big problem,” he said. “You know why? Heat. You have to have small spaces to stay warm.” He paused a moment, and then shouted, “Hey, Sue!” Susanne was behind the “Employees Only” sign, watching TV. “Where’s the picture of the eighteenth-century Murphy I got out of a magazine?”

“I don’t know.”

“This picture would blow your mind,” he said. “It’s a piano that turns into a bed, plus it has a dresser and a washbasin inside. I mean, it’s humbling.”

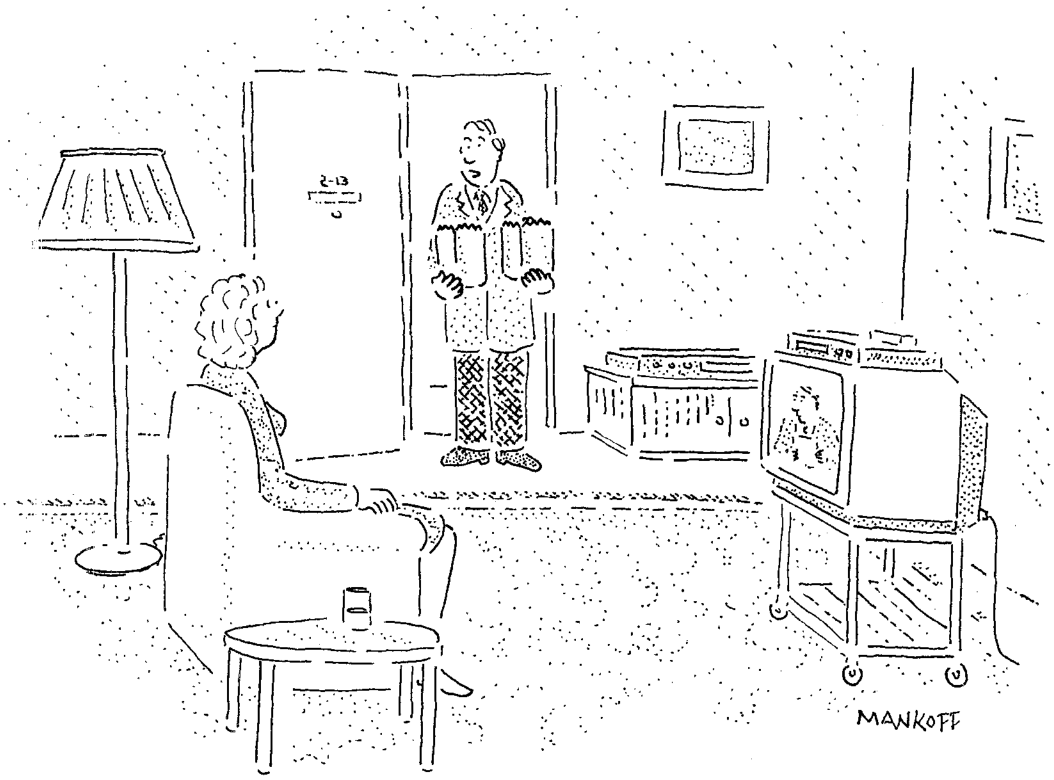


“It was just as I suspected—the fuzzy dice hanging from your rearview mirror were badly worn and in need of replacement.”

Haggis Madness

“THERE’S nothing we Scots like better than to make people eat some haggis, take some whiskey, and listen to bagpipes,” Eleanora Tevis said the other night at her annual celebration of Robert Burns’ birthday. Eleanora, whose maiden name is Walker (“as in Johnnie Walker Red”), and who comes from Lochwinnoch (seventeen miles from Glasgow), has been offering haggis to her friends for ten years now at her Robert Burns celebrations. This was the first year that she had invited us, but the sixth year that she had invited her friends in the local Tibetan community.

Eleanora has been fascinated with Tibet ever since she saw Ronald Colman in “Lost Horizon” and fell in love with the idea of Shangri-La, the mythical kingdom in northern Tibet. She’s a regular at the Tibetan Kitchen, at Third Avenue and Thirty-first Street—she and her husband, the late Walter Tevis (he wrote “The Hus-



"Any more autonomous republics created while I was out?"

tler" and "The Color of Money"), ate there so often that they became friends of the owner, Pema Thonden, and her husband, Phintso, and of the cook, Tenor Rinpoché. Of all the Tibetans at the party, only one, Lakhpa Sherpa, who was with a Gurkha regiment in Singapore for five years, had tasted haggis before meeting Eleanora. "We went to sleep by the bagpipes and woke up by the bagpipes," he said. "The officers' mess had haggis. It is an acquired taste. It takes maybe five years to acquire it."

The party piped in the haggis in the traditional way. Lawrence Cole, a professional bagpiper, played "Scotland the Brave," and everyone raised a glass and toasted the haggis, which lay on a platter in Eleanora's living room, perspiring like a water balloon. Charles Allan Robertson, of Dundee, a former butler who teaches Scottish country dancing, read Burns' "Address to a Haggis"—or three stanzas of it, anyway—and plunged a serrated knife into the Scottish national dish. And then—"O what a glorious sight, Warm-reekin, rich!"—Eleanora slit open the bag and the haggis gushed forth. Standing at the bar, on which were arranged a small framed portrait of Robert Burns and a vase of heather, she poured Scotch on the haggis ("It's a blessing on the haggis, and it cuts the grease," she said) and served it forth, using what appeared to be an unusually large spoon.

"Can I have a little more?" begged Annie Kirkpatrick Nash, who was wearing plaid tights.

"Oop, that's enough," said Ken Deardoff, who is originally from Nebraska.

"I'll have just a wee bit," said Holly June McGregor, a Canadian Scot.

"Oh, that's fine, thank you," Pema Thonden said, trying to withdraw her plate from under the heaping haggis spoon.

"There's lots more," Eleanora said reassuringly.

"No, I'm fine," Pema replied. "The Tibetans were so polite at first," Eleanora told us. "They are born diplomats. They'll never let you know they don't like something you serve. Then one year they brought hot sauce." She indicated a little bowl next to the traditional purried neeps (mashed turnips). "Then Pema brought lamb curry to augment the lamb innards. This year, we have the première of haggis momo."

Momo are Tibetan dumplings, and haggis momo are probably the first Scottish-Tibetan delicacy in the world. Haggis momo were conceived by a Tibetan ad man who goes by the name Gyatso. ("I specialize in juxtapositions," he says.) He drank a lot of whiskey last year to help him put away the haggis, so he doesn't really remember having had the idea. The execution was by Tenor, of the Tibetan Kitchen, using a haggis supplied by Eleanora, and plenty of hot sauce. Gyatso served the momo, and was later chosen to offer the traditional toast to the lassies, which he prefaced with a few remarks on "the dreaded haggis." Then he said, "Tibetans are a very peaceful people, but we've made an aggressive move on the haggis." He read some poems by the Sixth Dalai Lama, who everyone agreed had a lot in common with Robert Burns.

"Strangely enough, there are similarities between the two cultures," Eleanora said. "They're both highland nations. Scots have the lion rampant, Tibetans have the snow leopard. Scots have the Highland cattle, Tibetans have the yak. There are fifty million English and five million Scots, yet the Scots have put their mark on the world. It's the same with China and Tibet. Tibet has been a separate nation for two thousand years. There's that stubbornness, the determination that your culture is going to win."

The final mandatory item on the agenda, the singing of "Amazing Grace," was preceded by a demonstration of the Gay Gordons by Charles Robertson, who flung himself around the room as nimbly as a man a fraction his age. Afterward, we sat down next to Tenzing Chhodak, the director of the Tibet Fund, who was talking with Pema Thonden. We asked Tenzing what he thought of the haggis, and he said, "In Tibet, we eat it all the time." This was news to Pema. Tenzing described something that sounded like yak sausage. "Maybe in east Tibet," she said.

A REAL LIFE

A MAN came along and fell in love with Dorrie Beck. At least, he wanted to marry her. It was true.

"If her brother were alive she would never have needed to get married," Millicent said. What did she mean? Not something shameful. And she didn't mean money, either. She meant that love had existed, kindness had created comfort, and in the poor, somewhat feckless life Dorrie and Albert Beck had lived together, loneliness had not been a threat. Millicent, who was shrewd and practical in some ways, was stubbornly sentimental in others. She believed always in the sweetness of affection that was untainted by sex.

She thought it was the way Dorrie used her knife and fork that had captivated the man. Indeed, it was the same way he used his. Dorrie kept her fork in her left hand and used the right only for cutting. That was because she had been to Whitby Ladies' College when she was young. A last spurt of the Becks' money. Another thing she had learned there was a beautiful handwriting, and that might have been a factor as well, because after the first meeting the entire courtship appeared to have been conducted by letter. Millicent loved the sound of Whitby Ladies' College, and it was her plan—not shared with anybody—that her own daughter would go there someday.

Millicent was not an uneducated person herself. She had taught school, she hadn't married early. She had rejected two serious boyfriends—one because she couldn't stand his mother, one because he tried putting his tongue in her mouth—before she agreed to marry Porter, who was nineteen years older than she was. He owned three farms, and he promised her a bathroom within a year, and a dining-room suite and a chesterfield and chairs. On their wedding night he said, "Now you've got to take what's coming to you," but she knew it was not unkindly meant.

That was in 1933.

She had three children, fairly quickly, and after the third baby she developed some problems. Porter was decent—mostly, after that, he let her alone.

The Beck house was on Porter's land, but he wasn't the one who had bought them out. He bought Albert and Dorrie's place from the man who had bought it from them. So, technically, they were renting their old house back from Porter. But money did not enter the picture. When Albert was alive he would show up and work for a day when important jobs were undertaken—when they were pouring the cement floor in the barn or putting the hay in the mow. Dorrie had come along on those occasions, and also when Millicent had a new baby or was housecleaning. Dorrie had remarkable strength for lugging furniture about, and could do a man's work, like putting up the storm windows. At the start of a hard job—such as ripping the wallpaper off a whole room—she would settle back her shoulders and draw a deep, happy breath. She glowed with resolution. She was a big, firm woman with heavy legs, chestnut-brown hair, a broad, bashful face and dark freckles like dots of velvet. A man in the area had named a horse after her.

In spite of her enjoyment of housecleaning, she did not do a lot of it at home. The house that she and Albert had lived in—that she lived in alone after his death—was large and handsomely laid out but practically without furniture. Furniture would come up in Dorrie's conversation—the oak sideboard, Mother's wardrobe, the spool bed—but tacked on to this mention was always the phrase "that went at the Auction." The Auction sounded like a natural disaster, something like a flood and windstorm together, about which it would be pointless to complain. No carpets remained, either, and no pictures. There was just the calendar from Nunn's Grocery, which Albert used to work for. Absences of customary things—and the presence of others, such as Dorrie's traps and guns and the boards for stretching rabbit and muskrat skins—had made the rooms lose their designations, made the notion of cleaning them seem frivolous. Once, in the summer, Millicent saw a pile of dog dirt at the head of the stairs. She didn't see it while it was fresh, but it was fresh enough to seem an offense. Through the summer it changed, from brown to gray. It became stony, dignified, and stable, and, strangely, Millicent herself found less and less need to see it as anything but something that had a right to be there.

Delilah was the dog responsible. She was black, part Labrador. She chased cars, and eventually this was how she got herself killed. After Albert's death, both she and Dorrie may have come a little unhinged. But this was not something anybody could spot right away. At first, it was just that there was no man coming home, and so no set time to get supper. There were no men's clothes to wash—cutting out the idea of regular washing. Nobody to talk to, so Dorrie talked more to Millicent or to both Millicent and Porter. She talked about Albert and his job, which had been driving Nunn's Grocery Wagon, and later their truck, all over the countryside. He had gone to college, he was no dunce, but when he came home from the Great War he was not very well, and he thought it best to be out-of-doors, so he got the job driving for Nunn's and kept it until he died. He was a man of inexhaustible sociability and did more than simply deliver groceries. He gave people a lift to town. He brought patients home from the hospital. He had a crazy woman on his route, and once when he was getting her groceries out of the truck he had a compulsion to look around. There she stood with a hatchet, about to brain him. In fact, her swing had already begun, and when he slipped out of range she had to continue, chopping neatly into the box of groceries and cleaving a pound of butter. He kept on making deliveries to her, not having the heart to turn her over to the authorities, who would take her to the asylum. She never took up the hatchet again but gave him cupcakes sprinkled with evil-looking seeds, which he threw into the grass at the end of the lane. Other women, more than one, had shown themselves to him naked. One of them arose out of a tub of bath water in the middle of the kitchen floor, and Albert bowed low and set the groceries at her feet. "Aren't some people amazing?" said Dorrie. And she also told about a bachelor whose house was overrun by rats, so that he had to keep his food slung in a sack from the kitchen beams. But the rats ran out along the beams and leaped upon the sack and clawed it apart, and eventually the fellow was obliged to take all his food into bed with him.

"Albert always said people living alone are to be pitied," said Dorrie—as if she did not understand that she was now one of them. Albert's heart had given out—he had only had time to pull to the side of the road and stop the truck. He died in a lovely spot, where black oaks grew in a bottomland, and a sweet, clear creek ran beside the road.

Dorrie mentioned other things Albert had told her, concerning the Becks in the early days. How they came up the river in a raft, two brothers, and started a mill at the Big Bend, where there was nothing but the wildwoods. And nothing now, either, but the ruins of their mill and dam. The farm was never a livelihood but a hobby, when they built the big house and brought out the furniture from Edinburgh. The bedsteads, the chairs, the carved chests that went in the Auction. They brought it round the Horn, Dorrie said, and up Lake Huron and so up the river. Oh, Dorrie, said Millicent, that is not possible, and she brought a school geography book she had kept, to point out the error. It must have been a canal, then, said Dorrie. I recall a canal. The Panama Canal? More likely it was the Erie Canal, said Millicent.

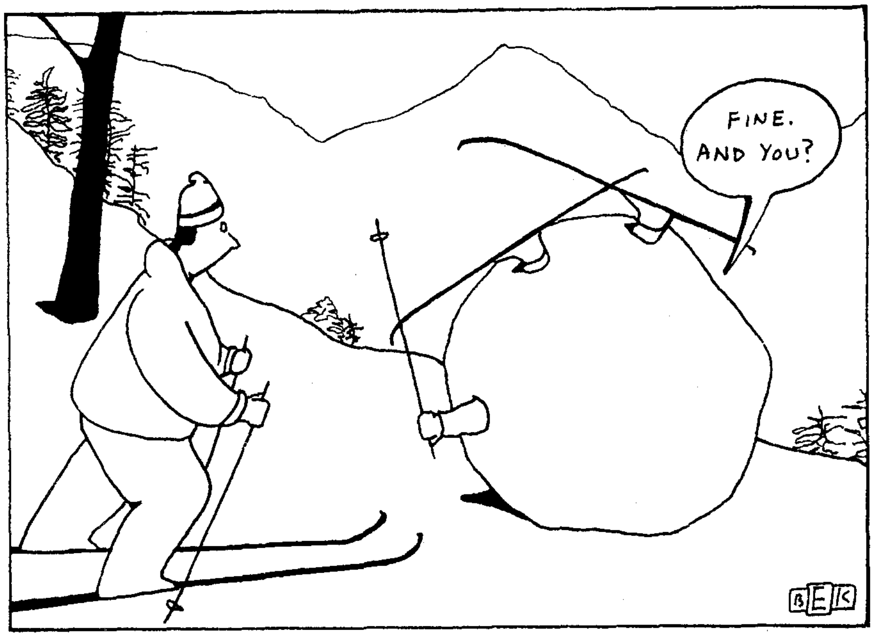
"Yes," said Dorrie. "Round the Horn and into the Erie Canal."

"Dorrie is a true lady, no matter what anybody says," said Millicent to Porter, who did not argue. He was used to her absolute, personal judgments. "She is a hundred times more a lady than Muriel Snow," said Millicent, naming the person who might be called her best friend. "I say that, and I love Muriel Snow dearly."

Porter was used to hearing that, too: "I love Muriel Snow dearly, and I would stick up for her no matter what." "I love Muriel Snow, but that does not mean I approve of everything she does."

The smoking. And saying hot damn, Chrissakes, poop. *I nearly pooped my pants.*

Muriel Snow had not been Millicent's first choice for best friend. In the early days of her marriage she had set her sights high. Mrs. Lawyer Nesbitt. Mrs. Doctor Finnegan. Mrs. Doud. They let her take on a donkey's load of work in the Women's Auxiliary at the church, but they never asked her to their tea parties. She was never inside their houses, unless it was to a meeting. Porter was a farmer. No matter how many farms. She should have known.



She met Muriel when she decided that her daughter, Betty Jean, would take piano lessons. Muriel was the music teacher. She taught in the schools as well as privately. Times being what they were, she charged only twenty cents a lesson. She played the organ at the church and directed various choirs, but some of that was for nothing. She and Millicent got on so well that soon she was in Millicent's house as often as Dorrie was, though on a rather different footing.

Muriel was over thirty and had never been married. Getting married was something she talked about openly, jokingly, and plaintively, particularly when Porter was around. "Don't you know any men, Porter?" she would say. "Can't you dig up just one decent man for me?" Porter would say maybe he could, but maybe she wouldn't think they were so decent. In the summers Muriel went to visit a sister in Montreal, and once she went to stay with some cousins she had never met, only written to, in Philadelphia. The first thing she reported on, when she got back, was the man situation.

"Terrible. They all get married young, they're Catholics, and the wives never die—they're too busy having babies."

"Oh, they had somebody lined up for me, but I saw right away he would never pan out. He was one of those ones with the mothers."

"I did meet one, but he had an awful failing. He didn't cut his toenails. Big yellow toenails. Well? Aren't you going to ask me how I found out?"

Muriel was always dressed in some shade of blue. A woman should pick a color that really suits her and wear it all the time, she said. Like your perfume. It should be your signature. Blue was widely thought to be a color for blondes, but that was incorrect. Blue often made a blonde look more washed-out than she was to start with. It suited best a warm-looking skin, like Muriel's—skin that took a good tan and never entirely lost it. It suited brown hair and brown eyes, which were hers as well. She never skimped on her clothes—it was a mistake to. Her fingernails were always painted—a rich and distracting color, apricot or blood ruby or even gold. She was small and round; she did exercises to keep her tidy waistline. She had a dark mole on the front of her neck, like a jewel on an invisible chain, and another, like a tear, at the corner of one eye.

"The word for you is not 'pretty,'" Millicent said one day, surprising herself. "It's '*bewitching*.'" Then she flushed at her own tribute, knowing she sounded childish and excessive.

Muriel flushed a little too, but with pleasure. She drank in admiration, frankly courted it. Once she dropped in on her way to a concert in Walley, which she hoped would yield rewards. She had on an ice-blue dress that shimmered.

"And that isn't all," she said. "Everything I have on is new, and everything is *silk*."

It wasn't true that she never found a man. She found one fairly often but hardly ever one that she could bring to supper. She found them in other towns, where she took her choirs to massed concerts, in Toronto at piano recitals to which she might take a promising student. Sometimes she found them in the students' own homes. They were the uncles, the fathers, the grandfathers, and the reason that they would not come into Millicent's house but only wave—sometimes curtly, sometimes with bravado—from a waiting car was that they were married. A bedridden wife, a drinking wife, a vicious shrew of a wife? Perhaps. Sometimes no mention at all—a ghost of a wife. They escorted Muriel to musical events, an interest in music being the ready excuse. Sometimes there was even a performing child, to act as chaperon. They took her to dinners in restaurants in distant towns. They were referred to as friends. Millicent defended her. How could there be any harm when it was all so out in the open? But it wasn't, quite, and it would all end in misunderstandings, harsh words, unkindness. A wife on the phone. Miss Snow, I am sorry we are cancelling— Or simply silence. A date not kept, a note not answered, a name never to be mentioned again.

"I don't expect so much," Muriel said. "I expect a friend to be a friend. Then they hightail it off at the first whiff of trouble, after saying they would always stand up for me. Why is that?"

"Well, you know, Muriel," Millicent said once, "a wife is a wife. It's all well and good to have friends, but a marriage is a marriage."

Muriel blew up at that—she said that Millicent thought the worst of her, like everybody else, and was she never to be permitted to have a good time, an innocent good time? She banged the door and ran her car over the calla lilies, surely on purpose. For a day Millicent's face was blotchy from weeping. But enmity did not last and Muriel was back, tearful as well, and taking blame on herself.

"I was a fool from the start," she said, and went into the front room to play the piano. Millicent got to know the pattern. When Muriel was happy and had a new friend she played mournful, tender songs, like "The Flowers of the Forest." Or:

She dressed herself in male attire,
And gaily she was dressed—

Then, when she was disappointed, she came down hard and fast on the keys, and she sang scornfully some such song as "Bonnie Dundee."

To the Lords of Convention
'Twas Claverhouse spoke,
Ere the King's head go down
There are heads to be broke!

SOMETIMES Millicent asked people to supper (though not the Finnegans or the Nesbitts or the Douds), and then she liked to ask Dorrie and Muriel as well. Dorrie was a help in washing up the pots and pans afterward, and Muriel could entertain on the piano.

A couple of years after Albert died, Millicent asked the Anglican minister to come on Sunday, after Evensong, and bring the friend she had heard was staying with him. The Anglican minister was a bachelor, but Muriel had given up on him early. Neither fish nor fowl, she said. Too bad. Millicent liked him, chiefly for his voice. She had been brought up an Anglican, and though she'd switched to United, which was what Porter said he was (so was everybody else, so were all the important and substantial people in the town), she still favored Anglican customs. Evensong, the church bell, the choir coming up the aisle in meagre state, singing—instead of just all clumping in together and sitting down. Best of

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THE BUTCHER'S SON

Mr. Pierce the butcher
Got news his son was missing
About a month before
The closing of the war.
A bald man, tall and careful,
He stood in his shop and found
No bottom to his sadness,
Nowhere for it to stop.
When my aunt came through the door,
Delivering the milk,
He spoke, with his quiet air
Of a considerate teacher,
But words weren't up to it;
He turned back to the meat.

The message was in error.
Later that humid summer,
At a local high-school fête,
I saw, returned, the son
Still in his uniform.
Mr. Pierce was not there
But was as if implied
In the son who looked like him,
Except he had red hair.
For I recall him well,
Encircled by his friends,
Beaming a life charged now
Doubly because restored,
And recall also how
Within his hearty smile
His lips contained his father's,
Like a light within the light
That he turned everywhere.

—THOM GUNN

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SPANISH MOSS IS A SOFT, SILVER-GRAY TROPICAL EPIPHYTE THAT USES TREE LIMBS FOR MECHANICAL SUPPORT.
Please help.
BOOTH

all, the words. *But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent; According to thy promises. . . .*

Porter went with her once and hated it.

Preparations for this evening's supper were considerable. The damask was brought out, the silver serving spoon, the black dessert plates painted by hand with pansies. The cloth had to be pressed and all the silverware polished, and then there was the apprehension that a tiny smear of polish might remain, a gray gum on the tines of a fork or among the grapes round the rim of the wedding teapot. All day Sunday Millicent was torn between pleasure and agony, hope and suspense. The things that could go wrong multiplied. The Bavarian cream might not set (they had no refrigerator yet and had to chill things in summer by setting them on the cellar floor). The angel-food cake might not rise to its full glory. If it did rise, it might be dry. The biscuits might taste of tainted flour or a beetle might crawl out of the salad. By five o'clock she was in such a state of tension and misgiving that nobody could stay in the kitchen with her. Muriel had arrived early, to help out, but she had not chopped the potatoes finely enough, and had managed to scrape her knuckles while grating carrots, so she was told off for being useless and sent to play the piano.

Muriel was dressed up in turquoise crêpe and smelled of her Spanish perfume. She might have written off the minister but she had not seen his visitor yet. A bachelor, perhaps, or a widower, since he was travelling alone. Rich, or he would not be travelling at all, not so far. He came from England, people said. Someone said no, Australia.

She was trying to get up the "Polovtsian Dances."

Dorrie was late. It threw a crimp in things. The jellied salad had to be taken down cellar again, lest it should soften. The biscuits put to warm in the oven had to be taken out, for fear of their getting too hard. The three men sat on the veranda—the meal was to be eaten there, buffet style—and drank fizzy lemonade. Millicent had seen what drink did in her own family—her father had died of it when she was ten—and she had required a promise from Porter, before they married, that he would never touch it again. Of course he did—he kept a bottle in the granary—but when he drank he kept his distance, and she truly believed the promise had been kept. This was a fairly common pattern, at that time, at least among farmers—drinking in the barn, abstinence in the house. Most men would have felt there was something the matter with a woman who didn't lay down such a law.

But Muriel, when she came out on the veranda in her high heels and slinky crêpe, cried out at once, "Oh, my favorite drink! Gin and lemon!" She took a sip and pouted at Porter. "You did it again. You forgot the gin again!" Then she teased the minister, asking if he didn't have a flask in his pocket. The minister was gallant, or perhaps made reckless by boredom. He said he wished he had.

The visitor who rose to be introduced was tall and thin and sallow, with a face that seemed to hang in pleats, precise and melancholy. Muriel did not give way to disappointment. She sat down beside him and tried in a most spirited way to get him into conversation. She told him about her music teaching and was scathing about the local choirs and musicians. She did not spare the Anglicans, telling about the Sunday-school concert when the master of ceremonies announced that she would play a piece by Chopin, pronouncing it "Choppin."

Porter had done the chores early and washed and changed into his suit, but he kept looking uneasily toward the barnyard, as if recalling something that was left undone. One of the cows was bawling loudly in the field, and at last he excused himself to go and see what was wrong with her. He found that her calf had got caught in the wire fence and managed to strangle itself. He did not speak of this loss when he came back with newly washed hands. "Calf caught up in the fence" was all he said. But he connected the mishap somehow with this entertainment, with dressing up and having to eat off your knees. It was not natural.

"Those cows are as bad as children," Millicent said. "Always wanting your attention at the wrong time!" Her own children, fed earlier, peered from between the bannisters to watch the food being carried to the veranda. "I think we will have to commence without Dorrie. You men must be starving. This is just a simple little buffet. We sometimes enjoy eating outside on a Sunday evening."

"Commence, commence!" cried Muriel, who had helped to carry out the various dishes—the potato salad, carrot salad, jellied salad, cabbage salad, the devilled eggs and cold roast chicken, the salmon loaf and warm biscuits, and the relishes. Just when they had everything set out, Dorrie came around the side of the house, looking warm from her walk across the field, or from excitement. She was wearing her good summer dress, a navy-blue organdie with white dots and white collar, suitable for a little girl or an old lady. Threads showed where she had pulled the torn lace off the collar instead of mending it, and in spite of the hot day a rim of undershirt was hanging out of one sleeve. Her shoes had been so recently and sloppily cleaned that they left traces of whitener on the grass.

“I would have been on time,” Dorrie said, “but I had to shoot a feral cat. She was prowling around my house and carrying on so, I was convinced she was rabid.”

Dorrie had wet her hair and crimped it into place with bobby pins. With that, and her pink, shiny face, she looked like a doll with a china head and limbs attached to a cloth body firmly stuffed with straw.

“I thought at first she might have been in heat, but she didn’t really behave that way. She didn’t do any of the rubbing along on her stomach such as I’m used to seeing. And I noticed some spitting. So I thought the only thing to do was to shoot her. Then I put her in a sack and called up Fred Nunn to see if he would run her over to Walley, to the vet. I want to know if she really was rabid, and Fred always likes the excuse to get out in his car. I told him to leave the sack on the step if the vet wasn’t home on a Sunday night.”

“I wonder what he’ll think it is?” said Muriel. “A present?”

“No. I pinned on a note, in case. There was definite spitting and dribbling.” Dorrie touched her own face to show where the dribbling had been. “Are you enjoying your visit here?” she said to the minister, who had been in town for three years and had been the one to bury her brother.

“It is Mr. Speirs who is the visitor, Dorrie,” said Millicent. Dorrie acknowledged the introduction and seemed unembarrassed by her mistake. She said that the reason she took the animal for a feral cat was that its coat was all matted and hideous, and she thought that a feral cat would never come near the house unless it was rabid.

“But I will put an explanation in the paper, just in case. I will be sorry if it is anybody’s pet. I lost my own pet three months ago—my dog, Delilah. She was struck down by a car.”

It was strange to hear that dog called a pet, that big black Delilah who used to lollop along with Dorrie all over the countryside, who tore across the fields in such savage glee to attack cars. Dorrie had not been distraught at the death; indeed, she had said she had expected it someday. But now, to hear her say “pet,” Millicent thought there might have been grief she didn’t show.

“Come and fill up your plate or we’ll all have to starve,” Muriel said to Mr. Speirs. “You’re the guest, you have to go first. If the egg yolks look dark, it’s just what the hens have been eating—they won’t poison you. I grated the carrots for that salad myself, so if you notice some blood it’s just where I got a little too enthusiastic and grated in some skin off my knuckles. I had better shut up now or Millicent will kill me.”

And Millicent was laughing angrily, saying, “Oh, they are not! Oh, you did *not!*”

Mr. Speirs had paid close attention to everything Dorrie said. Maybe that was what had made Muriel so saucy. Millicent thought that perhaps he saw Dorrie as a novelty, a Canadian wild woman who went around shooting things. He might be studying her so that he could go home and describe her to his friends in England.

Dorrie kept quiet while eating, and she ate quite a lot. Mr. Speirs ate a lot, too—Millicent was happy to see that—and he appeared to be a silent person at all times. The minister kept the conversation going by describing a book he was reading. It was called “The Oregon Trail.”

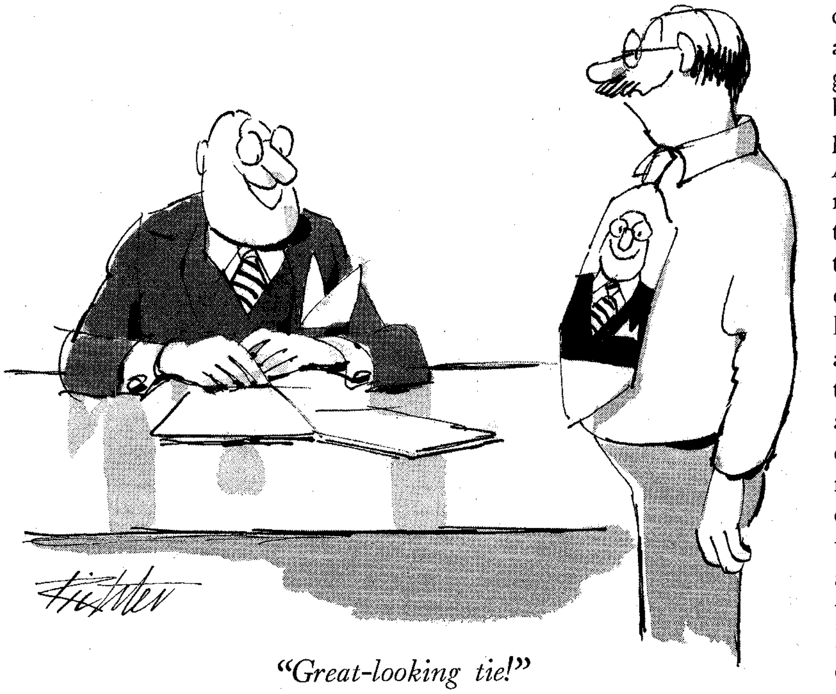
“Terrible, the hardships,” he said.

Millicent said she had heard of it. “I have some cousins living out in Oregon, but I cannot remember the name of the town,” she said. “I wonder if they went on that trail.”

The minister said that if they went out a hundred years ago it was most probable.

“Oh, I wouldn’t think it was that long,” Millicent said. “Their name was Rafferty.”

“Man the name of Rafferty used to race pigeons,” said Porter, with sudden energy. “This was way back, when there was more of that kind of thing. There was money going on it, too. Well, he said the problem with the pigeons’ house, they don’t go in right away, and that means they don’t trip the wire and don’t get counted in. So he took an egg one of his pigeons was on, and he blew it clear, and he put a beetle inside. And the beetle inside made such a racket the pigeon naturally thought she had an egg getting ready to hatch. And she flew a beeline home and tripped the wire, and all the ones that bet on her made a lot of money. Him, too, of course. In fact, this was over in Ireland, and this man that told the story, that was how he got the money to come out to Canada.”



“Great-looking tie!”

WMHamilton

"I have a feeling that today's going to be in most biographies of me."

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Millicent didn't believe that the man's name had been Rafferty at all. That had just been an excuse.

"So you keep a gun in the house?" said the minister to Dorrie. "Does that mean you are worried about tramps and suchlike?"

Dorrie put down her knife and fork, chewed something up carefully, and swallowed. "I keep it for shooting," she said.

After a pause she said that she shot groundhogs and rabbits. She took the groundhogs over to the other side of town and sold them to the mink farm. She skinned the rabbits and stretched the skins, then sold them to a place in Walley which did a big trade with the tourists. She enjoyed fried or boiled rabbit meat but could not possibly eat it all herself, so she often took a rabbit carcass, cleaned and skinned, around to some family that was on relief. Many times her offering was refused. People thought it was as bad as eating a dog or a cat. Though even that, she believed, was not considered out of the way in China.

"That is true," said Mr. Speirs. "I have eaten them both."

"Well, then, you know," said Dorrie. "People are prejudiced."

He asked about the skins, saying they must have to be removed very carefully, and Dorrie said that was true, and you needed a knife you could trust. She described with pleasure the first clean slit down the belly. "Even more difficult with the muskrats, because you have to be more careful with the fur, it is more valuable," she said. "It is a denser fur. Waterproof."

"You do not shoot the muskrats?" said Mr. Speirs.

No, no, said Dorrie. She trapped them. Trapped them, yes, said Mr. Speirs, and Dorrie described her favorite trap, on which she had made little improvements of her own. She had thought of taking out a patent but had never gotten around to it. She spoke about the spring watercourses, the system of creeks she followed, tramping for miles day after day, after the snow was mostly melted but before the leaves came out, when the muskrats' fur was prime. Millicent knew that Dorrie did these things, but she had thought she did them to get a little money. To hear her talk now, it would seem she loved that life. The blackflies out already, the cold water over her boot tops, the drowned rats. And Mr. Speirs listened like an old dog, perhaps a hunting dog, that has been sitting with his eyes half shut, just prevented, by his own good opinion of himself, from falling into an unmannerly stupor. Now he has got a whiff of something—his eyes open all the way and his nose quivers as he remembers some day of recklessness and dedication. How many miles did she cover in a day, Mr. Speirs asked, and how high is the water, how much do the muskrats weigh and how many could you count on in a day and for muskrats is it still the same sort of knife?

Muriel asked the minister for a cigarette and got one, smoked for a few moments, and stubbed it out in the middle of her dish of the Bavarian cream. "So I won't eat it and get fat," she said. She got up and started to help clear the dishes, but soon ended up at the piano, back at the "Polovtsian Dances."

Millicent was pleased that there was conversation with the guest, though its attraction mystified her. Also, the food had been good and there had not been any humiliation—no queer taste or sticky cup handle.

"I had thought the trappers were all up north," said Mr. Speirs. "I thought that they were beyond the Arctic Circle or at least on the Precambrian shield."

"I used to have an idea of going there," Dorrie said. Her voice thickened for the first time, with embarrassment—or excitement. "I thought I could live in a cabin and trap all winter. But I had my brother. I couldn't leave my brother. And I know it here."

LATE in the winter Dorrie arrived at Millicent's house with a large piece of white satin. She said that she intended to make a wedding dress. That was the first anybody had heard of a wedding—she said it would be in May—or learned the first name of Mr. Speirs. It was Wilkinson. Wilkie.

When and where had Dorrie seen him, since that supper on the veranda?

Nowhere. He had gone off to Australia, where he had property. Letters had gone back and forth between them.

Millicent's questions drew out a little more information. Wilkie had been born in England but was now an Australian. He had travelled all over the world, climbed mountains, and gone up a river into the jungle. In Africa, or South America—Dorrie was not sure which.

"He thinks I am adventurous," said Dorrie, as if to answer an unspoken question about as to what he saw in her.

"And is he in love with you?" said Millicent. It was she who blushed then, not Dorrie. But Dorrie, unblushing, unfidgeting, was like a column of heat, bare and concentrated. Millicent had an awful thought of her naked, so that she hardly heard what Dorrie said. She amended the question to what she believed she had meant: "Will he be good to you?"

"Oh—yes," said Dorrie, rather carelessly.

Sheets were laid down on the dining-room floor, with the dining table pushed against the wall. The satin was spread out over them. Its broad, bright extent, its shining vulnerability, cast a hush over the whole house. The children came, only to stare at it, and Millicent shouted to them to clear off. She was afraid to cut into it. And Dorrie, who could so easily slit the skin of an animal, laid the scissors down. She confessed to shaking hands.

A call was put in to Muriel, to drop by after school. She clapped her hand to her heart when she heard the news, and called Dorrie a slyboots, a Cleopatra who had fascinated a millionaire.

"I bet he's a millionaire," Muriel said. "Property in Australia—what does that mean? I bet it's not a pig farm! All I can hope is maybe he'll have a brother. Oh, Dorrie, am I so mean I didn't even say congratulations?"

She gave Dorrie lavish, loud kisses—Dorrie standing still for them, as if she were five years old.

Dorrie said that she and Mr. Speirs planned to go through "a form of marriage." What do you mean, said Millicent, do you mean a marriage ceremony, is that what you mean?—and Dorrie said yes.

Muriel made the first cut into the satin, saying that somebody had to do it, though maybe if she were doing it again it wouldn't be in quite that place.

Soon they got used to mistakes. Mistakes and rectifications. Late every afternoon, when Muriel got there, they tackled a new stage—the cutting, the pinning, the basting, the sewing—with clenched teeth and grim rallying cries. They had to alter the pattern as they went along, to allow for problems unforeseen, such as the tight set of a sleeve, the bunching of the heavy satin at the waist, the eccentricities of Dorrie's figure. Dorrie was a menace at the job, so they set her to sweeping up scraps and filling the bobbin. Whenever she sat at the sewing machine she clamped her tongue between her teeth. Sometimes she had nothing to do, and she walked from room to room in Millicent's house, stopping to stare out the windows at the snow and sleet, the long-drawn-out end of winter. Or she stood like a docile beast in her woollen underwear, which smelled quite frankly of her flesh, while they pulled and tugged the material around her.

Muriel had taken charge of the clothes. She knew what there had to be. There had to be more than a wedding dress. There had to be a going-away outfit, and a wedding nightgown and a matching dressing gown, and of course an entire new supply of underwear. Silk stockings, and a brassiere—the first that Dorrie had ever worn.

Dorrie had not known about any of that. "I considered the wedding dress as the major hurdle," she said. "I could not think beyond it."

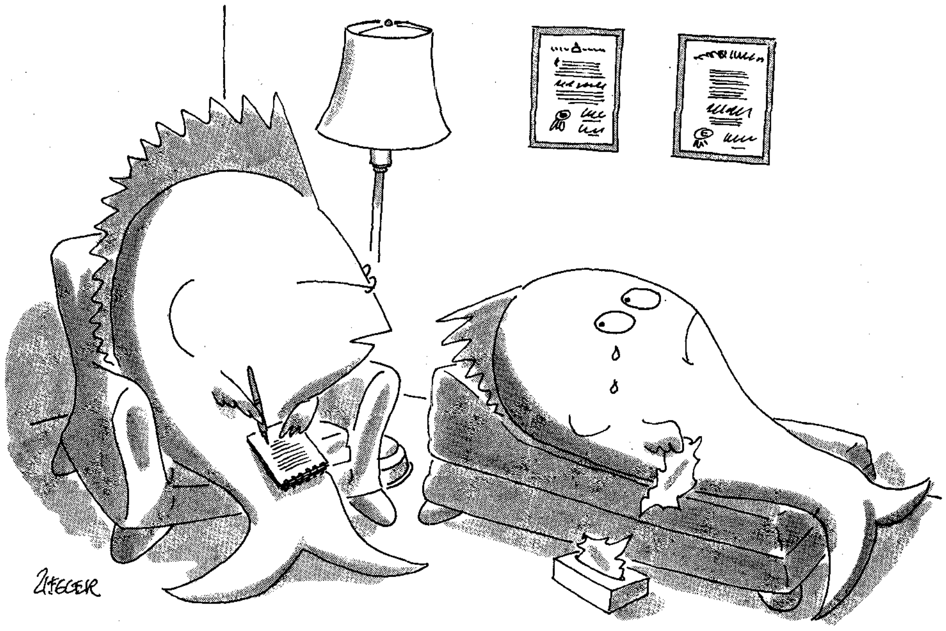
The snow melted, the creeks filled up, the muskrats would be swimming in the cold water, sleek and sporty, with their treasure on their backs. If Dorrie thought of her traps she did not say so. The only walk she took these days was across the field from her house to Millicent's.

Made bold by experience, Muriel cut out a dressmaker suit of fine russet wool, and a lining. She was letting her choir rehearsals go all to pot.

Millicent had to think about the wedding luncheon. It was to be held in the Brunswick Hotel. But who was there to invite, except the minister? Lots of people knew Dorrie, but they knew her as the lady who left skinned rabbits on doorsteps, who went through the fields and the woods with her dog and gun and waded along the flooded creeks in her high rubber boots. Few people knew anything about the old Becks, though all remembered Albert and had liked him. Dorrie was not quite a joke—something protected her from that, either Albert's popularity or her own gruffness and dignity—but the news of her wedding had roused a lot of interest, not exactly of a sympathetic nature. Her marriage was being spoken of as a freakish event, mildly scandalous, possibly a hoax. Porter said that bets were being laid on whether the man would show up.

Finally, Millicent recalled some cousins, who had come to Albert's funeral. Ordinary, respectable people. Dorrie had their addresses, invitations were sent. Then the Nunn brothers from the grocery, whom Albert had worked for, and their wives. A couple of Albert's lawn-bowling friends and their wives. The people who owned the mink farm where Dorrie sold her groundhogs? The woman from the bakeshop who was going to ice the cake?

The cake was being made at home, then taken to the shop to be iced by the woman who had got a diploma in cake decorating from a place in Chicago. It would be covered with white roses, lacy scallops, hearts and garlands and silver leaves and those tiny silver candies you can break your tooth on.



"Has it ever occurred to you just to say, 'Hey, I quit. I don't want to be a part of the food chain anymore'?"

Meanwhile it had to be mixed and baked, and this was where Dorrie's strong arms could come into play, stirring and stirring a mixture so stiff it appeared to be all candied fruit and raisins and currants with a little gingery batter holding everything together like glue. When Dorrie got the big bowl against her stomach and took up the beating spoon, Millicent heard the first satisfied sigh to come out of her in a long while.

Muriel decided that there had to be a maid of honor. Or a matron of honor. It could not be her, because she would be playing the organ. "O Perfect Love." And the Mendelssohn.

It would have to be Millicent. Muriel would not take no for an answer. She brought over an evening dress of her own, a long sky-blue dress, which she ripped open at the waist—how confident and cavalier she was by now, about dressmaking!—and she proposed a lace midriff, of darker blue, with a matching lace bolero. It will look like new and suit you to a T, she said.

Millicent laughed when she first tried it on, and she said, "There's a sight to scare the pigeons!" But she was pleased. She and Porter had not had much of a wedding—they had just gone to the rectory, deciding to put the money saved into furniture. "I suppose I'll need some kind of thingamajig," she said. "Something on my head."

"Her veil!" cried Muriel. "What about Dorrie's veil? We've been concentrating so much on wedding dresses, we've forgotten all about a veil!"

Dorrie spoke up unexpectedly and said that she would never wear a veil. She could not stand to have one draped over her, it would feel like cobwebs. Her use of the word "cobwebs" gave Muriel and Millicent a start, because there were jokes being made about cobwebs in other places.

"She's right," said Muriel. "A veil would be too much." She considered what else. A wreath of flowers? No, too much again. A picture hat? Yes, get an old summer hat and cover it with white satin. Then get another and cover it with the dark-blue lace.

"Here is the menu," said Millicent dubiously. "Creamed chicken in pastry shells, little round biscuits, molded jellies, that salad with the apples and the walnuts, pink and white ice cream with the cake—"

Thinking of the cake, Muriel said, "Does he by any chance have a sword, Dorrie?"

YEA.
YEA.
YEA.
NOT A CHANCE.

Dorrie said, "Who?"

"Wilkie. Your Wilkie. Does he have a sword?"

"What would he have a sword for?" Millicent said.

"I just thought he might," said Muriel.

"I cannot enlighten you," said Dorrie.

Then there was a moment in which they all fell silent, because they had to think of the bridegroom. They had to admit him to the room and set him down in the midst of all this. Picture hats. Creamed chicken. Silver leaves. They were stricken with doubts. At least Millicent was, and Muriel. They hardly dared to look at each other.

"I just thought since he was English, or whatever he is," said Muriel.

Millicent said, "He is a fine man, anyway."

THE wedding was set for the second Saturday in May. Mr. Speirs was to arrive on the Wednesday and stay with the minister. The Sunday before, Dorrie was supposed to come over to have supper with Millicent and Porter. Muriel was there, too. Dorrie didn't arrive, and they went ahead and started without her.

Millicent stood up in the middle of the meal. "I'm going over there," she said. "She'd better be sharper than this getting to her wedding."

"I can keep you company," said Muriel.

Millicent said no thanks. Two might make it worse.

Make what worse?

She didn't know.

She went across the field by herself. It was a warm evening, and the back door of Dorrie's house was standing open. Between the house and where the barn used to be there was a grove of walnut trees, whose branches were still bare, since walnut trees are among the very latest to get their leaves. The hot sunlight pouring through bare branches seemed unnatural. Her feet did not make any sound on the grass.

And there on the back platform was Albert's old armchair, never taken in all winter.

What was in her mind was that Dorrie might have had an accident. Something to do with a gun. Maybe while cleaning her gun. That happened to people. Or she might be lying out in a field somewhere, lying in the woods among the old, dead leaves and the new leeks and bloodroot. Tripped while getting over a fence. Had to go out one last time. And then, after all the safe times, the gun had gone off. Millicent had never had any such fears for Dorrie before, and she knew that in some ways Dorrie was very careful and competent. It must be that what had happened this year made anything seem possible. The proposed marriage, such wild luck, could make you believe in calamity also.

But it was not an accident that was on Millicent's mind. Not really. Under this busy, fearful imagining of accidents, she hid what she really feared.

She called Dorrie's name at the open door. And so prepared was she for an answering silence, the evil silence and indifference of a house lately vacated by somebody who had met with disaster (or not vacated, yet, by the body of the person who had met with, who had *brought about*, that disaster)—so pre-

MR. COGITO AND A POET OF A CERTAIN AGE

1
A poet after the prime of life
a peculiar phenomenon

2
he looks at himself in the mirror
he breaks the mirror

3
on a moonless night
he drowns his birth certificate
in a black pond

4
he watches the young
imitates the way they swing their hips

5
he chairs a meeting
of independent Trotskyites
incites them to acts of arson

6
he writes letters
to the President of the Solar System
full of intimate confessions

7
the poet of a certain age
in the middle of an uncertain age

8
instead of cultivating
pansies and onomatopoeias
he plants prickly exclamations
invectives and treatises

9
he reads one after the other
Isaiah and "Das Kapital"
then in the fervor of discussion
confuses his quotations

10
a poet at an unclear time of life
between departing Eros
and Thanatos who has not yet risen
from his stone

11
he smokes hashish
but does not see
infinity
or flowers
or waterfalls
he sees a procession
of hooded monks
climbing a rocky mountain
with extinguished torches

12
the poet of a certain age
remembers his warm childhood
his exuberant youth
inglorious manhood

13
he plays
the game of Freud
he plays
the game of hope
he plays
at the red and black
he plays
at flesh and bones
he plays and loses
he bursts out with insincere laughter

14
only now does he understand his father
he cannot forgive his sister
who ran away with an actor
he envies his younger brother
bent over the photograph of his mother
he tries once more
to persuade her to conceive

15
his dreams
pubertal not serious
the priest from catechism
protruding objects
and the unattainable Jadzia

16
at dawn he looks
at his hand
he is surprised by his own skin
similar to bark

17
against the young blue sky
the white tree of his veins

—ZBIGNIEW HERBERT

(*Translated, from the Polish, by John and Bogdana Carpenter.*)

• •

pared was she for the worst that she was shocked, she went watery in the knees, at the sight of Dorrie herself in her old field pants and shirt.

"We were waiting for you," Millicent said. "We were waiting for you to come to supper."

Dorrie said, "I must've lost track of the time."

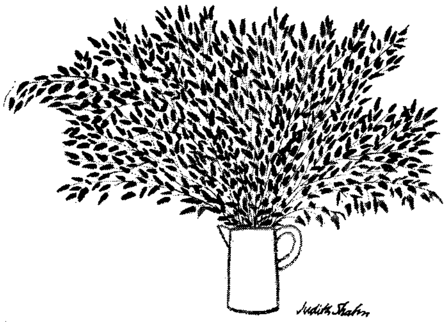
"Oh, have all your clocks stopped?" said Millicent, recovering her nerve as she was led through the back hall with its familiar, mysterious debris. She could smell cooking.

The kitchen was dark because of the big, unruly lilac pressing against the window. Dorrie used the house's original wood-burning cookstove, and she had one of those old kitchen tables with drawers for the knives and forks. It was a relief to see that the calendar on the wall was for this year.

Yes—Dorrie was cooking some supper. She was in the middle of chopping up a purple onion, to add to the bits of bacon and sliced potatoes she had frying up in the pan. So much for losing track of the time.

"You go ahead," said Millicent. "Go ahead and make your meal. I did get something to eat before I took it into my head to go and look for you."

"I made tea," said Dorrie. It was keeping warm on the back of the stove, and when she poured it out it was like ink.



"I can't leave," she said, prying up some of the bacon that was sputtering in the pan. "I can't leave here."

Millicent decided to treat this as she would a child's announcement that she could not go to school.

"Well, that'll be a nice piece of news for Mr. Speirs," she said. "When he has come all this way."

Dorrie leaned back as the grease became fractious.

"Better move that off the heat a bit," Millicent said.

"I can't leave."

"I heard that before."

Dorrie finished her cooking and scooped the results onto a plate. She added ketchup and a couple of thick slices of bread soaked in the grease that was left in the pan. She sat down to eat, and did not speak.

Millicent was sitting, too, waiting her out. Finally she said, "Give a reason."

Dorrie shrugged and chewed.

"Maybe you know something I don't," Millicent said. "What have you found out? Is he poor?"

Dorrie shook her head. "Rich," she said.

So, Muriel was right.

"A lot of women would give their eyeteeth."

"I don't care about that," Dorrie said. She chewed and swallowed and repeated, "I don't care."

Millicent had to take a chance, though it embarrassed her. "If you are thinking about what I think you may be thinking about, then it could be that you are worried over nothing. A lot of the time when they get older they don't even want to bother."

"Oh, it isn't that! I know all about that."

Oh, do you, thought Millicent, and if so, how? Dorrie might imagine she knew, from animals. Millicent had sometimes thought that no woman would get married, if she really knew.

Nevertheless, she said, "Marriage takes you out of yourself and gives you a real life."

"I have a life," Dorrie said. "Perhaps I am not adventurous," she added.

"All right, then," said Millicent, as if she had given up arguing. She sat and drank her poison tea. She was getting an inspiration. She let time pass and then she said, "It's up to you, it certainly is. But there is a problem about where you will live. You can't live here. When Porter and I found out you were getting married we put this place on the market, and we sold it."

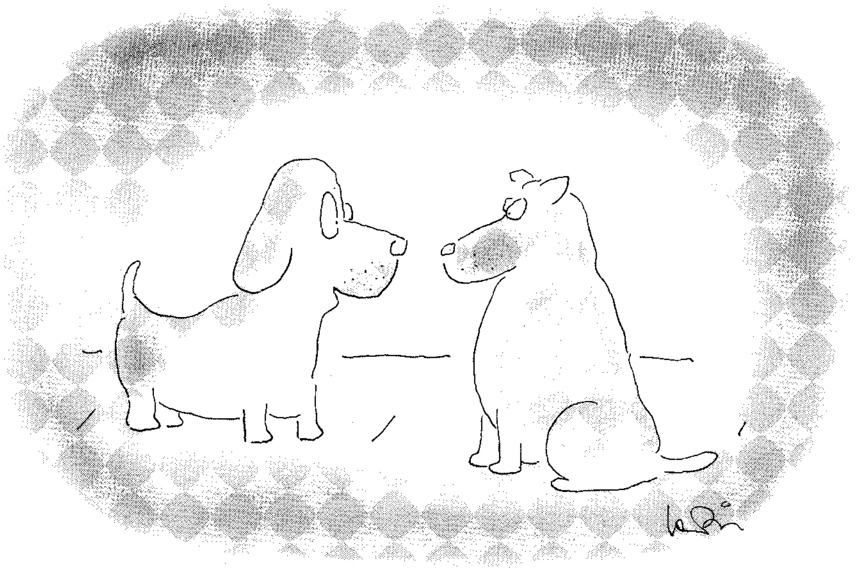
Dorrie said instantly, "You're lying."

"We didn't want it standing empty to make a haven for tramps. We went ahead and sold it."

"You would never do such a trick on me."

"What kind of a trick would it be when you were getting married?"

Millicent was already believing what she said. Soon it could come true. They could offer the place at a low enough price, and somebody would buy it. It could still be fixed up. Or it could be torn down, for the bricks and the woodwork. Porter would be glad to be rid of it.



"I just heard some interesting news. The world is going to the dogs."

• •

Dorrie said, "You would not put me out of my house."

Millicent kept quiet.

"You are lying, aren't you?" said Dorrie.

"Give me your Bible," Millicent said. "I will swear on it."

Dorrie actually looked around. She said, "I don't know where it is."

"Dorrie, listen. All of this is for your own good. It may seem like I am pushing you out, but all it is is making you do what you are not quite up to doing on your own."

"Oh," said Dorrie. "Why?"

Because the wedding cake is made, thought Millicent, and the satin dress is made, and the luncheon has been ordered and the invitations have been sent. All this trouble that has been gone to. People might say that was a silly reason, but those who said that would not be the people who had gone to the trouble. It was not fair, to have your best efforts squandered.

But it was more than that, for she believed what she had said, telling Dorrie that this was how she could have a life. And what did Dorrie mean by "here"? If she meant that she would be homesick, let her be! Homesickness was never anything you couldn't get over. Millicent was not going to pay any attention to that "here." Nobody had any business living a life out "here" if they had been offered what Dorrie had. It was a kind of sin, to refuse such an offer. Out of stubbornness, out of fearfulness, and idiocy.

She had begun to get the feeling that Dorrie was cornered. Dorrie might be giving up, or letting the idea of giving up seep through her. Perhaps. She sat as still as a stump, but there was a chance such a stump might be pulpy within.

But it was Millicent who began suddenly to weep. "Oh, Dorrie," she said. "Don't be stupid!" They both got up and grabbed hold of each other, and then Dorrie had to do the comforting, patting and soothing in a magisterial way, while Millicent wept, and repeated some words that did not hang together. *Happy. Help. Ridiculous.*

"I will look after Albert," she said, when she had calmed down somewhat. "I'll put flowers. And I won't mention this to Muriel Snow. Or to Porter. Nobody needs to know."

Dorrie said nothing. She seemed a little lost, absent-minded, as if she was busy turning something over and over, resigning herself to the weight and strangeness of it.

"That tea is awful," said Millicent. "Can't we make some that's fit to drink?" She went to throw the contents of her cup into the slop pail.

There stood Dorrie in the dim window light—mulish, obedient, childish, female—a most mysterious and maddening person, whom Millicent seemed now to have conquered, to be sending away. At greater cost to herself, Millicent was thinking—greater cost than she had understood. She tried to engage Dorrie in a sombre but encouraging look, cancelling her fit of tears. She said, "The die is cast."

DORRIE walked to her wedding. Nobody had known that she intended to do that. When Porter and Millicent stopped the car in front of her house, to pick her up, Millicent was still anxious. "Honk the horn," she said. "She better be ready now."

Porter said, "Isn't that her down ahead?"

It was. She was wearing a light-gray coat of Albert's over her satin dress and was carrying her picture hat in one hand, a bunch of lilacs in the other. They stopped the car and she said, "No. I want the exercise. It will clear out my head."

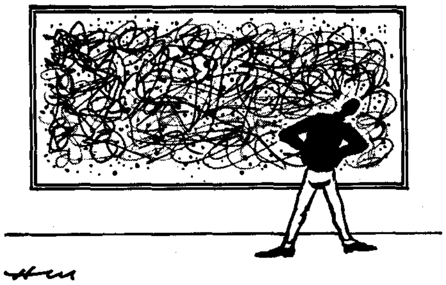
They had no choice but to drive on and wait at the church and see her approaching down the street, people coming out of shops to look, a few cars honking sportively, people waving and calling out, "Here comes the bride!" As she got closer to the church she stopped and removed Albert's coat, and then she was gleaming, miraculous, like the pillar of salt in the Bible.

Muriel was inside the church, playing the organ, so she did not have to realize, at this last moment, that they had forgotten all about gloves and that Dorrie clutched the woody stems of the lilac in her bare hands. Mr. Speirs had been in the church, too, but he had come out, breaking all rules, leaving the minister to stand there on his own. He was as lean and yellow and wolfish as Millicent remembered, but when he saw Dorrie fling the old coat into the back of Porter's car and settle the hat on her head—Millicent had to run up and fix it right—he appeared nobly satisfied. Millicent had a picture of him and Dorrie mounted high, mounted on elephants, panoplied, borne cumbrously forward, adventuring. A vision. She was filled with optimism and relief and she whispered to Dorrie, "He'll take you everywhere! He'll make you a queen!"

"I HAVE grown as fat as the Queen of Tonga," wrote Dorrie from Australia, some years on. A photograph showed that she was not exaggerating. Her hair was white, her skin brown, as if all her freckles had got loose and run together. She wore a vast garment, colored like tropical flowers. The war had come and put an end to any idea of travelling, and then when it was over Wilkie was dying. Dorrie stayed on, in Queensland, on a great property where she grew sugarcane and pineapples, cotton, peanuts, tobacco. She rode horses, in spite of her size, and had learned to fly an airplane. She took up some travels of her own in that part of the world. She had shot crocodiles. She died in the fifties, in New Zealand, climbing up to look at a volcano.

Millicent told everybody what she had said she would not mention. She took credit, naturally. She recalled her inspiration, her stratagem, with no apologies. "Somebody had to take the bull by the horns," she said. She felt that she was the creator of a life—more effectively, in Dorrie's case, than in the case of her own children. She had created happiness, or something close. She forgot the way she had wept without knowing why.

The wedding had its effect on Muriel. She handed in her resignation, she went off to Alberta. "I'll give it a year," she said. And within a year she had found a husband—not the sort of man she had ever had anything to do with in the past. A widower with two small children. A Christian minister. Millicent wondered at Muriel's describing him that way. Weren't all ministers Christian? When they came back for a visit—by this time there were two more children, their own—she saw the point of the description. Smoking and drinking and swearing were out, and so was wearing makeup, and the kind of music that Muriel used to play. She played hymns now—the sort she had once made fun of. She wore any color at all and had a bad permanent—her hair, going gray, stood up from her forehead in frizzy bunches. "A lot of my former life turns my stomach—just to think about it," she said, and Millicent got the impression that she and Porter were seen mostly as belonging to those stomach-turning times.



THE house was not sold or rented. It was not torn down, either, and its construction was so sound that it did not readily give way. It was capable of standing for years and years and presenting a plausible appearance. A tree of cracks can branch out among the bricks, but the wall does not fall down. Window sashes settle, at an angle, but the window does not fall out. The doors were locked, but it was probable that children got in and wrote things on the walls and broke up the crockery that Dorrie had left behind. Millicent never went in to see.

There was a thing that Dorrie and Albert used to do, and then Dorrie did alone. It must have started when they were children. Every year, in the fall, they—and then, she—collected up all the walnuts that had fallen off the trees. They kept going, collecting fewer and fewer walnuts every day, until they were fairly sure that they had got the last, or the next-to-last, one. Then they counted them, and they wrote the total on the cellar wall. The date, the year, the total. The walnuts were not used for anything once they were collected. They were just dumped along the edge of the field and allowed to rot.

Millicent did not continue this useless chore. She had plenty of other chores to do, and plenty for her children to do. But at the time of year when the walnuts were lying in the long grass she would think of that custom, and how Dorrie must have expected to keep it up until she died. A life of customs, of seasons. The walnuts drop, the muskrats swim in the creek. Dorrie must have believed that she was meant to live so, in her reasonable eccentricity, her manageable loneliness. Probably she would have got another dog.

But I would not allow that, thinks Millicent. She would not allow it, and surely she was right. She has lived to be an old lady, she is living yet, though Porter has been dead for decades. She doesn't often notice the house. It is just there. But once in a while she does see its cracked face and the blank, slanted windows. The walnut trees behind, losing again, again, their delicate canopy of leaves.

I ought to knock that down and sell the bricks, she says, and seems puzzled that she has not already done so.

—ALICE MUNRO

PROFILES

OUTSIDER

II—HISTORY IS UPON US

IN 1941, the year of Jesse Jackson's birth, Greenville, South Carolina, was a quiet little hilly city—part of the state's semifeudal complex of textile mills—situated in the mild weathers of the Piedmont uplands, where the land begins lifting toward the distant Blue Ridge Mountains. About ten per cent of Greenville's inhabitants were black, and were confined to drab and cluttered precincts on the weedy back side of town, including a poorer quarter of flimsy plank houses and smoky dirt lanes, where Jackson was born on the afternoon of the eighth of October.

His family lineage, to the degree that it can be traced, vanishes—like that of most blacks in the South—four generations back, into the anonymity of Reconstruction and slavery. But, from the fraction of his genealogy that is known, Jackson could be said to present a kind of essential American story: by various reports, one of his grandfathers was half Indian; one of his great-grandmothers, who had been a slave, was part Cherokee; and a great-grandfather had been an Irish sheriff of Greenville County. "One of my aunts got almost platinum hair," Jackson says. One can see in Jackson himself, when his normally dark-acorn-brown skin takes on a grayish dullness in deep cold, a faint dappling of freckles under his eyes and across his nose. He is, as a political essayist once noted, a kind of walking Rainbow Coalition.

But those lines of descent were principally on the unlegitimatized side of his lineage. Jackson has long been telling high-school assemblies of black youths in the nation's inner cities, "You say, 'But Reverend Jackson, you just don't understand what it's like.' I *do* understand. I was born out of wedlock to a teen-age mother, who was born to a teen-age mother. How do I understand? I never slept in the house with my natural father one night in my life. I *understand*." His mother's mother—a slight, brisk woman named Matilda Burns, commonly called Tibby—for years set out in the early mornings from her scruffy neighborhood to work as a maid in the household of a comfortably moneyed white family. She was illiterate but industrious, pious, and proud, and almost grimly ambitious for her single child, Helen, born as an "outside" baby in the fleeting frivolities of her own girlhood. Helen had grown into a luminously pretty girl, lead majorette at her high school, with a lush and vibrant singing voice that by the time she was sixteen had attracted offers of scholarships from five music colleges. But it was at that age that she fell into a romance with a married man in his mid-thirties, who lived next door with his wife and three stepchildren.

His name was Noah Robinson, and he was an imposing figure—a tall, burly former amateur boxer, with skin the hue of rich amber. He was relatively prosperous, with a position as a cotton grader for a white-owned firm in town. But he had not, as yet, fathered any children of his own, and, he later told the writer Gail Sheehy, Helen offered to bear him a child. Her pregnancy devastated and embittered her mother, and her church congregation exiled her from their midst for a time, until she stood before them one Sunday with her newborn son in her arms and apologized to them all.

In campaign speeches, Jackson has at times, heedless of embarrassment, blurted out, "When I was in my mother's belly, no father to give me a last name, they called me a bastard and rejected me." Even so, once he was born—acknowledged, at least, by Robinson as his, and given the first name Jesse, for Robinson's father, and Robinson's own middle name, Louis—he was to be extravagantly cherished by both women. A memory of that early warmth returned to Jackson, in an unexpected gust, during a visit in 1989 to a children's hospital in the earthquake wreckage of Armenia, when volunteer nurses, most of them elderly women, crowded around him, weeping, and he wrapped them in massive hugs, with tears blurring his eyes. "I kept seeing my grandmother in their faces," he said afterward. "They were old, with all those odds against them. Hardly any family left, livin' in ruins, jobless and, by some standards, futureless. Yet the human spirit had not left them. Like, it's tough, but we not gonna give up, we gonna hold on—but we're hurtin'. Yet they not lookin' for a window to jump out of. About all that's left of their community, and they are its strength. They embraced those children just like my grandmother. Hover over those babies like, like they will not let even the elements *touch* those babies."

His mother, her aspirations toward a music career now abandoned, absorbed herself in raising her son, with a devoutness of concentration so intense, one of Jackson's former schoolteachers recalls, that "he was always made to feel he was a gift from God to his mother."

When Jackson conjures forth his version of the Nativity in his speeches now, he will sometimes transmogrify it into a kind of parable of his own origins: "I know why Jesus was so sensitive to the poor and lonely—he was born to a poor couple. Innkeeper told 'em she'd have to have that baby outdoors, in the *wintertime*, but in fact that was *every* woman's baby—every pregnant woman has got one of God's children in her belly!" During one long, late-night reverie, Jackson, recollecting the circumstances of his own birth, remarked suddenly in a dry, thin whine of mock incredulity, "A teenage mother? Havin' a baby? No husband? No job? And you mean you want to go ahead and have that baby? Even raise it? Why, that's just not realistic. It's naïve. What kind of life can that baby ever expect to have?" It is almost certainly owing to that intimate consideration that Jackson's private sentiments on abortion seem notably more equivocal than his public support of the option. In casual conversation he will say, "In a sense, the whole issue of abortion is a consequence of an absence of self-esteem, self-worth. But the problem now is we got this turmoil of extremes. One group saying, 'I love babies so much, if we can't provide for them or they're unwanted, don't let 'em come into the world.' The other group saying, 'I love babies so much, they must come into the world even if they have to starve.' All of 'em using the language of love. We must have the right of self-determination, of course, but we must also live with the consequences of our judgments. Freedom to make a choice—it must be a *moral* choice. It's about human life, man. *Human life*."

ON the Saturday after the 1988 Presidential election, Jackson returned by private plane to Greenville for a community commemoration of his mother's sixty-fifth birthday. After the plane landed, he took a long ride, in the lingering bronze light of the late-autumn afternoon, back around the old neighborhoods of his growing up, measuring and relishing, as he constantly likes to do, how far he'd come from those streets. "So much has happened to us just in this year," he said. "I keep thinking about the odds, the responsibility I have now against what I was expected then to be doing at this stage in life."

Once during a visit to Africa, riding along a back road in Nigeria, Jackson passed through a clutter of shanties and muddy cinder-block houses set in bald dirt yards under mimosa-like trees, and came to a crossroads marketplace of ragtag stalls hung with gaudy tin signs, and, amid blowing smoke and dust, people everywhere. He suddenly exclaimed, "Look at *this!* This is the American South in the fifties. Those tin roofs on those houses, those cement blocks in those front yards? I grew up here. And this open market—I grew up running barefooted across this on Saturday mornings."

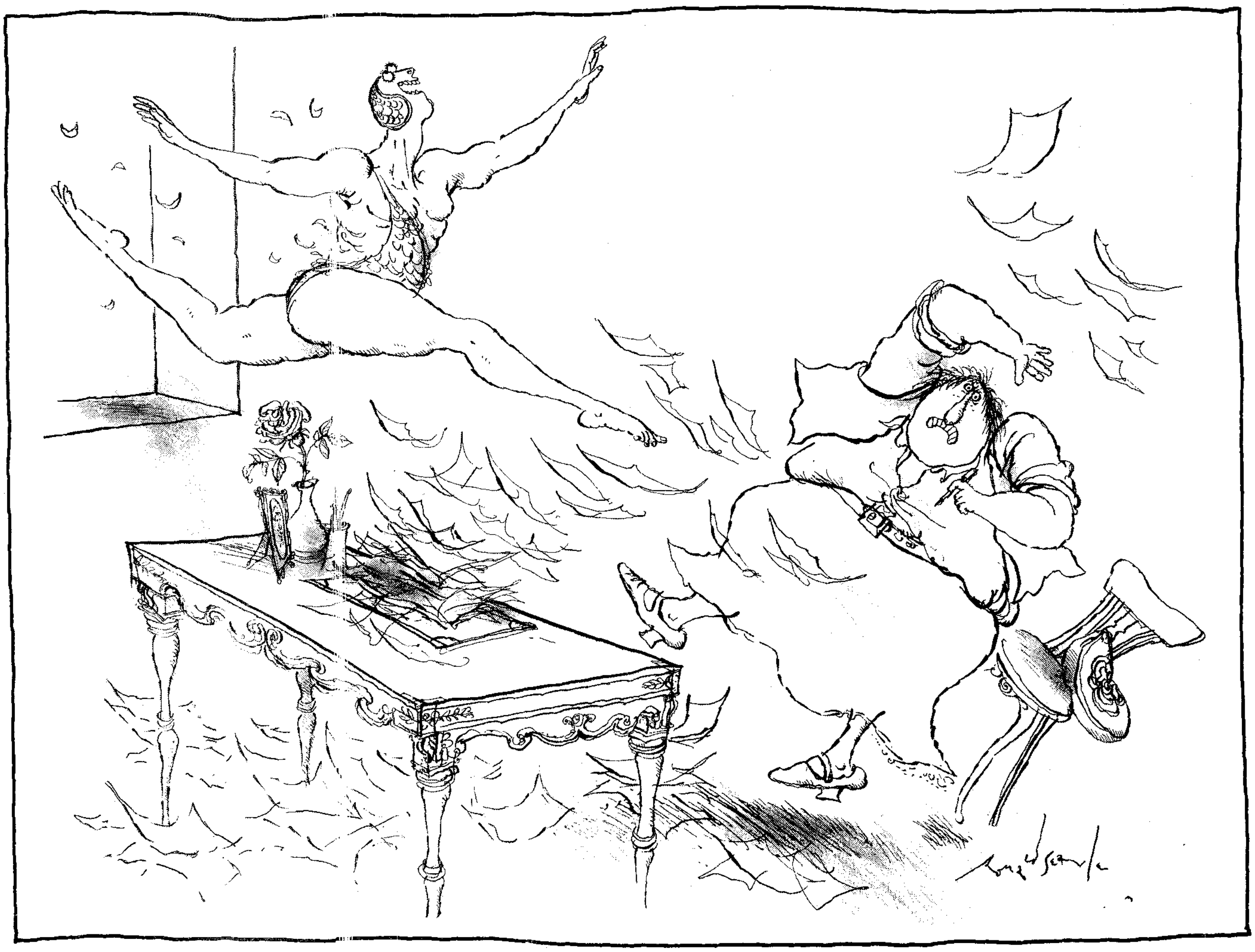
Now, as we drove around that black section of Greenville, which had been the setting of his boyhood, I saw that much of it had begun to be surrounded by and digested into the glassy geometric constructions of new office complexes, with occasional open expanses of grass where clusters of houses had simply been effaced, as if by random swipes of a giant eraser. But, as Jackson rode past the stragglings of houses among empty lots overwhelmed by kudzu, it was as if he were seeing that old neighborhood of over forty years ago still whole and undiminished. "Constant flashbacks," he muttered. "Amazing what keeps living in memory."

Back then, it had been a dense, dingy warren of unpaved lanes and shacky houses with sagging plank steps and plank porch railings lined with rusted coffee cans holding, in summer, ruffles of geraniums and caladiums. The houses were perched on tiny grassless, gullied yards, some scattered with woodchips and upturned washtubs and old tires and bluish puddles of pitched-out dishwater, others swept clean and enclosed by rickety fences assembled from scraps of boards and wire, with walkways bordered by bits of brick and cement block and broken bottles set in neat parallel lines in the dirt. "All these years, this neighborhood hasn't really changed that much," Jackson declared as he directed the driver—who, along with the car, had been furnished by a local funeral home—through a series of turns. "Yeah, I grew up all around here, several places." Wearing a black topcoat, he was sitting erect and alert in the front seat by the driver, his head swinging busily back and forth to survey both sides of the streets passing by. "Man, some of these houses are exactly *the same* as when I was born." Then he said, in a low, excited murmur, "That one right there, right up there"—he tapped his forefinger against the closed window beside him—"I was, I was born right there, in that house."

The car paused before a wooden structure indistinguishable from the ramshackle and paintless houses crowded about it, its windows dim in the autumn dusk. "People ask why is Jesse Jackson running for the White House—they don't see the house I'm running from. Three rooms, tin-top roof, no hot or cold running water, slop jar by the bed, bathroom in the back yard in the wintertime. Wood over the windows. Wallpaper put up not for decoration but to keep the wind out." He stared out the window. "In ways, it seems like a century ago." He then motioned the driver on. "Yet I remain connected to all this. By continuing to live in those experiences here, you have high-octane gas in your tank. Keep those experiences flowing through your soul—it gives you authenticity. You not talking about something defined by some sociologist. My speech at the Atlanta Convention, when I said, 'I understand,' that's why people were crying. 'He's well known, been on TV and all that, he be up there with all them big people now, but he still understands. Ain't just talkin' this stuff he don't understand—he understands.' "

When Jackson reflects on how far he has come from those origins, he will often lapse into a curious, cloudily mystical musing. "It's been like moving through this kind of slow chain combustion of dreams, one after the other. Dreams with this infinite character of dreams within dreams that keep on exploding one out of the other, on and on. Anybody ask me, 'Did you ever dream you'd be where you are today ten years ago?' the answer is no, because where I was ten years ago came out of a dream years before that. All this stuff just keeps coming—*boom, boom, boom.* I mean, what's happening to me now—back when I started, I didn't know to even *dream* for it."

Despite the general shabbiness of



CROSSED PATHS

The Spectre de la Rose Meets Gertrude Stein

• •

the neighborhood, we passed now and then brief rows of primly neat, compact brick homes. "See down there, those nicer houses?" Jackson said. "While we were terribly poor, the black neighborhoods were economically integrated. Had to be—the better-off had almost nowhere else they could go. So you could live in our class but have the benefits of being among all kinds of classes." This social mixture within the black community provided Jackson with perhaps his first restless realization of wider possibilities for himself. "Teachers down there, see. Then, right back here behind our house, in this alley, a whole other subculture—people back in there selling bootleg liquor, fight on the weekend, go to jail. So you could see, like, don't live like this"—he nodded toward the dirt alleyway—"but aspire to that." He pitched his thumb back toward the brick homes behind us.

We turned up another side street, Haynie Street, and Jackson pointed to a small white-shingled house ahead of us. "Now, we lived there while—" He suddenly snapped forward, his face close to the windshield. "That looks like—sho is, that's Mr. Clinkscales. They been living here ever since we left." He administered several soft hurried backward slaps against the driver's arm: "Turn up in here by the house just a minute." At the top of the steep driveway, an elderly, wizened man paused in his passage from a back-yard shed to a screen side door of the house to stare blankly at the car pulling up below him. Jackson heaved out of the car and, bellowing "Mr. Clinkscales!," went striding up the driveway. Clinkscales, a frail, papery figure, standing perfectly motionless, with his hand poised on the knob of the screen door, watched Jackson approaching him with a look of startled befuddlement. He finally replied, "How you do, sir," with a faintly tremulous uncertainty.

"It's Jesse," Jackson told him. "Jesse Jackson here." He laid one hand on Clinkscales' shoulder and gently patted it, as if to reassure the old man. "How you doin', buddy?" he said softly.

"Oh, I'm doin' fairly well."

Jackson said, "Where's ole Freddie Jean?"

"They gone to town."

"Well, tell her I came by to give her a holler, O.K.?"

"I certainly will," Clinkscales said, in a dry, light voice. "I certainly will."

He remained standing motionless by the screen door as Jackson walked back down the driveway toward the car. Up and down the street now, people had begun spilling out onto their front porches, calling to each other from house to house, "Hey, it's Jesse Jackson! Jesse Jackson's here!" A number of them collected around

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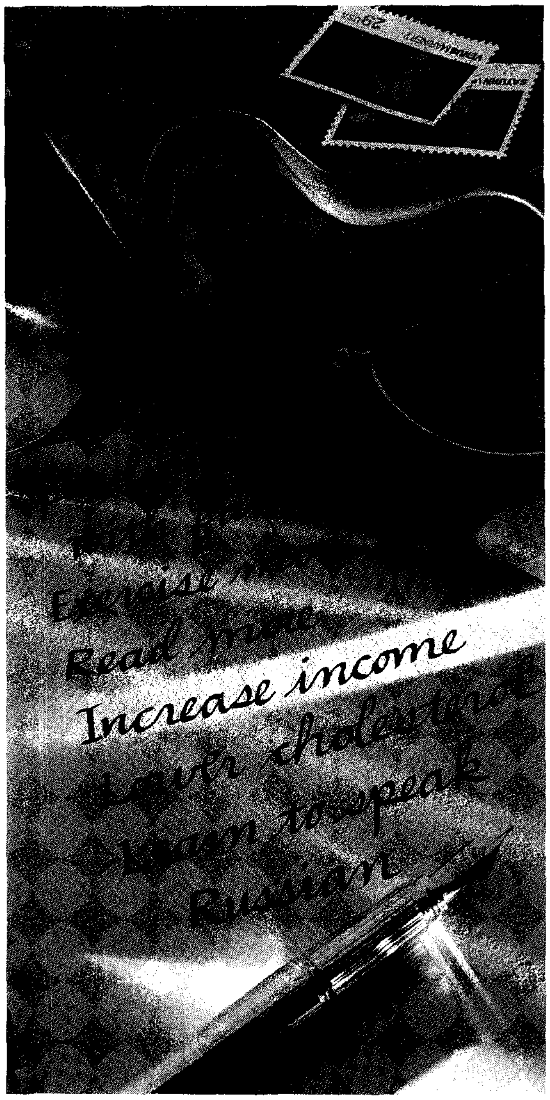

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the car as it began easing back down the street, calling in to him, "Look a-heeeere. . . . How you doin', Reverend? . . . All right, *sah!* . . ." Jackson reached out to briefly clasp their hands. "Love yuh, buddy, hang in there. Good to see you, baby. . . ." One small girl skipped along right beside his window, gazing in and gleefully piping to herself in a rapid trill, "*JesseJacksonJesseJacksonJesseJackson*," all the way to the corner, where the car turned.

Several streets over, arriving at a cul-de-sac, the car was blocked by another car, which swiftly pulled up alongside. Two teen-age girls scrambled out, one of them carrying a baby. "Now we caught," Jackson mumbled, not altogether uncheerfully, and, opening the door, he climbed out, blaring, "How y'all doin', now? Hi, baby."

The girl with the baby said, "We saw you drive by over there and just had to follow you."

Jackson cuddled the back of the baby's head with one large, cupped hand. "Look at this, ain't this something? How 'bout this precious little *thing!*"

The girl sang out, "That's *mine!*"

Jackson said, "This's the *real* point, now," and leaned down to nuzzle the baby, groaning, "Mmmm-ummmmh." He then enveloped both the girl and her infant in one wholesale hug. "Love you, honey. And take care of this baby, heunh?"

The girl, released, beamed raptly up at Jackson, her eyes dazzling, as if she had just received some grand blessing. She could not have been much older, in fact, than Jackson's own mother when he had been born to her.

HE had grown into a solitary child, with large and watchful eyes in a broad, bland, grave face. Whenever he managed to attract the notice of elders around him, though, that solemn expression would give way to a sly, elfin grin. He took to scampering about the neighborhood, wherever he spied other people gathered, with a tireless and frenetic eagerness that brought him the nickname Bo-Diddley. Impulsive, somewhat willful, he was subject to abrupt mood swings, and struggled with a thick, sputtering stammer. There frequently followed after him a recurring singsong taunt from other children, "Jesse ain't got no daddy, Jesse ain't got no daddy." He reacted not by fighting but by bursting into tears (a propensity that has stayed with him), and withdrawing into a lonely brooding. "I know people saying you're nothing and nobody and can never be anything," Jackson will sometimes say in his speeches now. "I understand when nobody knows your last name, when you have no last name. That's why I have always been able to identify with those the rest of society labels as bastards, as outcasts and moral refuse."

Actually, by the time Jesse was three, his mother was married—to a quiet, stolid, deliberate man named Charles Jackson, who was then serving in the Army. "My very first memory is of waking up in bed in Mama's arms," Jackson says, "and her showing me a picture of this soldier in uniform and telling me, 'This is your daddy. He's coming home from the Army on furlough for a few weeks.' " When Charles Jackson was finally discharged, at the end of the war, he returned to Greenville to work as a janitor in various office buildings. But even though Jesse found himself now living in the semblance of a conventional family, the schoolyard cries still shrilled after him: "Your daddy ain't none of your daddy. You ain't nothing but a nobody." Jackson does not recall when he was specifically told that he was not, in fact, the son of the man he had assumed was his father. But he remembers that around the age of five he was already aware that his natural father was Noah Robinson.

Robinson by now had sired children by his wife and, financially flourishing in the cotton business under the special favor of his employer, had moved to Greenville's one relatively stately black neighborhood. He had settled his family there in a spacious, pillared residence, built of fieldstone, that reposed on an expansive corner lot, with a basketball court, and even a creek. The property was enclosed by a brick wall, and the house's chimney was monogrammed with a large wrought-iron "R." Each week, Jackson took trumpet lessons in the neighborhood, and afterward, he has recounted, he would stand at the edge of Robinson's place for hours, gazing through a gate at the bountiful grounds within. At times, he would see the oldest of Robinson's sons by his wife—born ten months after Jesse, a boy with fairer skin and finer features, who was given his father's first name—playing on the big lawn. Once or twice, Jesse slipped into the yard and peered through a window, to see what he could glimpse of the life inside—the classic posture of the outsider. Since he was confined to the rude and cramped household of a janitor, where he was also, in a sense, an outsider, Robinson—this remote, mysterious figure of his true father, from whom he had come to be irrevocably separated—took on a kind of mythic aura. "I grew up on things I heard about *my* father," Jackson recalls. "Great boxer. Tall, upright, industrious, handsome. But you can't cry about what you don't have. Because you just don't have what you don't have."

In fact, although Robinson's wife maintained a testy resistance to any communication between her family and Jesse, Robinson kept up an intermittent, furtive contact with him. Now and then, as he would later confide to journalists, he would stop his car and get out to watch Jesse playing in some schoolyard or side lot. To any other adult who might be looking on, he sometimes could not resist remarking, with a kind of bluff proprietary satisfaction, "That's one of mine." Occasionally, he would beckon Jesse over, and they would lightly, briefly chat, Jesse addressing him as Didi. Having learned that there had been some five preachers among Robinson's forebears—including Robinson's own father—Jesse proclaimed to Robinson one afternoon that he was going to be a preacher himself someday; Robinson, he later told the writer Garry Wills, laughingly discounted the likelihood of that ever coming to pass. He would, though, usually smuggle him a nickel or two in these sidewalk encounters. On Thanksgivings and Easters, gift baskets would be delivered—with no card—to Jesse's house. (That they were accepted says something of Charles Jackson's self-restraint and tolerant resignation.) But beyond these few perfunctory and glancing attentions Robinson would venture no further risk of his wife's resentment. He was

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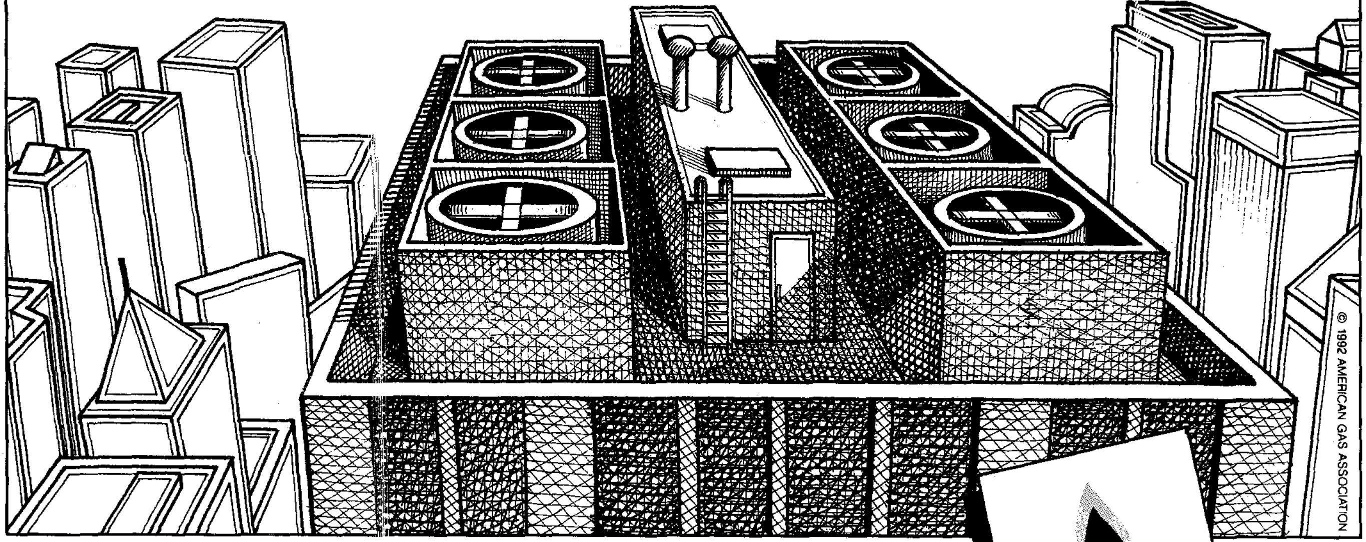

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TALES OF AN ART DEALER

During the coming months we would like to share with you some of our favorite Vose Galleries anecdotes, in the hope that you will come for a visit to hear the expanded version.

THE DISAPPEARING LADY: ROBERT C. VOSE'S (1873-1964) FAVORITE STORY . . . While in Los Angeles in 1929, a client persuaded Robert C. Vose to appraise a group of paintings in a monastery in Hollywood Hills. As Robert suspected, the walls were filled with copies of old masters — until he reached the last small room. There on the wall hung a rare Rembrandt, one of the forty or more that had been attributed at that time to the 17th Century Dutchman.

Portrait of a Girl Wearing a Gold-Trimmed Cloak, dated 1632, had been sent to the Hollywood monastery some ten years earlier by the Catholic Bishop of Chur, Switzerland. The Bishop hoped the Rembrandt would appeal to a wealthy Hollywood mogul.

Upon receiving word of Robert C. Vose's interest, the Swiss Bishop and his retinue of a dozen attendants spent a week in Boston negotiating the sale. Robert procured the painting for $100,000. A month before the stock market crash of 1929, the happy dealer sold the painting to Robert Treat Paine, a wealthy Boston collector, for $125,000.

Paine loaned the painting to Boston's Museum of Fine arts, where it hung undisturbed for the next 45 years.

In 1975, in a brazen noontime heist, two thieves stole the portrait at gunpoint and pistol-whipped a guard in the process. The FBI worked with a jailed rock group leader who had been charged with a series of crimes, including art theft. To avoid a prison term, the convict laid out secret negotiations for the painting's return. *Portrait of a Girl* was found in the trunk of a car, miraculously unharmed.

Eleven years later, the museum was jolted when Paine's heirs decided to sell the painting at auction because of unfavorable tax law changes. At a price of over $10,000,000, more than four times the highest price ever paid for a Rembrandt, *Portrait of a Girl* disappeared once again, this time to an unknown buyer who submitted an anonymous bid.

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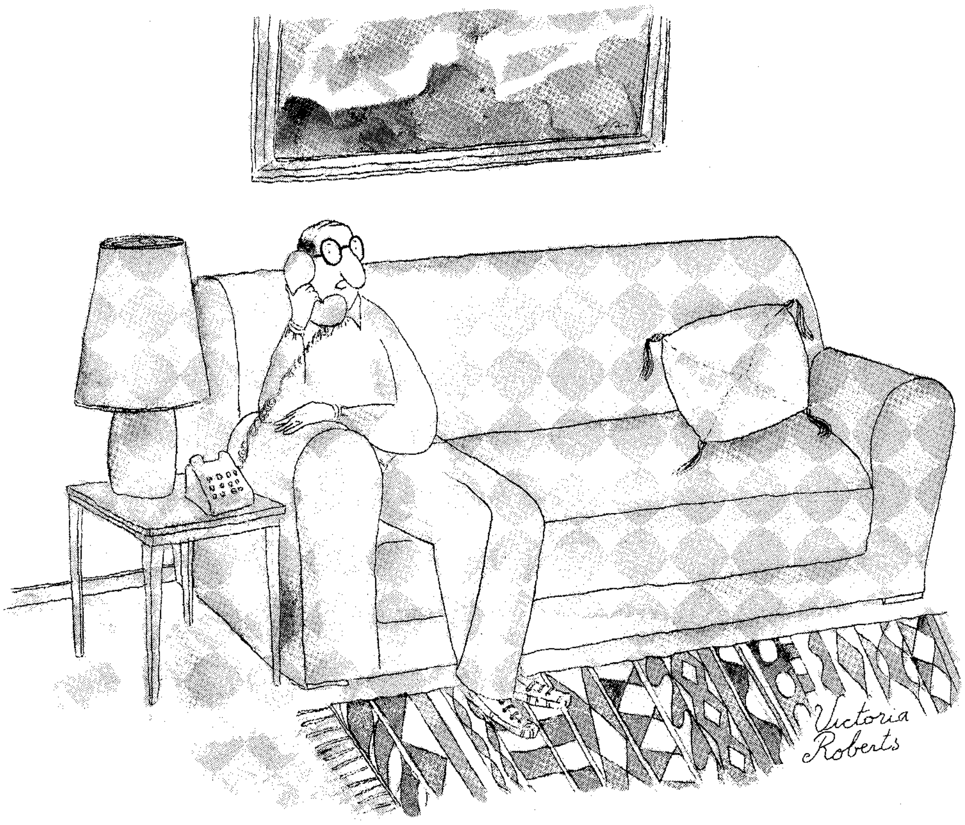
to remain only a detached, incidental bystander while his unclaimed son grew into a nationally famed figure. On the night that Jackson won South Carolina's Democratic caucuses, during the 1988 campaign for the Presidential nomination, a celebration was held for him in the auditorium of a technical college in Greenville, but as Jackson moved through the fanfare of that climactic homecoming Noah Robinson never appeared.

At one point during our ride, we passed a small collection of office buildings on the edge of the downtown area, and Jackson said, "Over there's the lawyers' building, where my father, stepfather actually, used to be janitor. Clean up the lawyers' building, you know. I'd help him—he taught me how to be a janitor. And, right over there, that's the courthouse where my adoption papers were filed, at about age twelve. Where I became Jesse Jackson. Before that, I was Jesse Burns, my grandmother's name." By then, his mother had borne another son, who was named Charles Jackson, Jr. (A slight, quiet man, he now lives in Los Angeles, where, after an eclectic career in the music and entertainment business, he runs a soul-food restaurant.) Even after Charles Jackson, Sr., officially became his adoptive father, Jesse persisted in calling him Charlie Henry.

Around the time Charles Jackson legally adopted Jesse, he also moved the family out of their old, ragged Haynie Street neighborhood to a newly constructed housing project, which, as we drove through it thirty years later, still had a neatly diagrammed look, with straight streets of boxy little two-story brick apartment houses. "Fieldcrest Village!" Jackson announced. "When we moved here from where we'd been, it was like the Promised Land. Brick, man! Red brick handles the winter a little different from those houses where you have to use wallpaper to keep the wind out. Solid floor, solid roof, hot and cold running water." A couple of months later, as he was riding past some dreary apartment complexes in Moscow, he said, "These projects here not all that different from Greenville, just bigger. Course, no private homes here like in Greenville, spacious lawns and all that. But poverty and wealth is relative, and a lot of it's in the mind. To us, when we first moved to the project, considering what we were coming from, we thought it was like a step toward being in the middle class—you know? I mean, had us a doorbell. Mailbox, too. Oh, yeah"—the memory stirred in him little bumps of chuckles—"telephone, straight line, no party line. Pantry, stove. Closets for the first time. An upstairs, I'm talkin' about. Even had us a little back yard. Hear what I'm saying? Yessir, *movin' on up!* And that ain't all. Had us"—he suddenly wheezed in laughter—"had us a *color* television set. That's right. Color television! Black-and-white TV with one of those tinted cellophane sheets over the screen. Yeah, man. All of us sittin' there watchin' . . . watchin' our color television!" He swiped a hand at tears in his eyes, still jostled by submerged jolts of laughter. "Movin' on up! In the *middle* class now."

In fact, Charles Jackson had obtained a position in Greenville's Post Office Building. As Jackson recalls, with something of the same wry merriment, "when he was working at the lawyers' building, he was just a janitor, you know. But when he began working in the Post Office Building, having to fill out all those application forms, he became a 'custodian.' *Good godamighty* here, now—a *custodian.*" As we drove past that building, a monumental edifice of granite and marble, Jackson remarked, "Judge Haynsworth had his office in there, up on the third floor. The whole building's named for him now. But my father used to clean up Judge Haynsworth's office there."

Years later, in 1969, Judge Clement F. Haynsworth, then serving on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, would be nominated by President Nixon for a seat on the Supreme Court but would be rejected by the Senate, over questions not so much of his serene remoteness from the elemental social tensions of the times as of the impropriety of his ruling in cases involving personal financial interests. But Haynsworth—a shy, fastidiously formal man—remained until his death, in 1989, a central fixture of what passed for Greenville's gentry. An insulated, decorous society, contained within an enclave of manorial homes along deeply shadowed streets, it was an order of life that, beyond Charles Jackson's weekday tidyings of Judge Haynsworth's office, could not have seemed more unreachably distant from the



"Someone's been sending me J. Crew catalogues."

• •

quarters in Greenville in which Jesse was raised. And at some point he discovered himself to be doubly dispossessed—not only discarded by his natural father but disdained by the larger community around him.

We happened to pass, not far from the Post Office Building, a big cemetery, tombstones congregated over several acres, and Jackson remarked, in a quick, flat voice, "This was the downtown graveyard. For whites only, of course." As we continued touring what had once been the intricate geographies of segregation in this Southern city, Jackson commented in almost stealthy whispers, as if he had somehow slipped back to spy into that past. "See, now, all this neighborhood was white." We were driving by a street of small, tidy homes with small, tidy lawns. "Basically, white textile-mill employees these were, all up these streets here. Blacks could not stay back here *at all*. There was a dividing line—Berlin Wall had nothing on the dividing line here. Came over here into this other country only to rake leaves or cut grass. But right over there across the road, look, look—all those houses, see up in there? The drama of it is, all that was *black*. You see how close blacks and whites actually lived together? Practically within voice call of each other. Some places we lived along here, whites' back yard was actually contiguous to ours. Mean, we were not permitted to sit on each other's front porches, but we could sit on each other's *back* porches. That was so Southern, black-white relations then. Know what I mean? So close, but still absolutely separate. Not like the big cities in the North—segregation down here was *personal*, man."

We came to an intersection, and Jackson said, "Up there on that corner, for instance, was this little store, had a white owner. I used to play with his son when I was about six, riding bikes and all that, and we'd go into his daddy's store sometimes and give this little whistle, you know, askin' him to give us candy. One afternoon, I went in, whistled, and his daddy took out a .45 and pointed it at me, said, 'You ever whistle at me again, little nigger, I'll blow your head off.' " Jackson said quietly, "Two things I remember about that, and neither one of 'em was fear. One was knowing immediately I couldn't tell my stepfather, because he'd come and probably kill the guy. But the other was how the other people in the store, who were black, pretended they hadn't even noticed it.

"Now, this street here—one of my first memories is sitting on the front steps of our house on this street, waiting to go for my first day of school. I could see this school several blocks up the street, with green grass around it and flags in front and all that—I thought that was the school Mama was talking about. So when we started walking and got to that school, I made a break for it. But Mama said, 'That's not the one. You can't go there. It's another one.' We kept walking. It was a school much further away, I found out, and it wasn't at all what I—but I'll show you." He gave the driver directions through a rambling of little streets. "Would walk along here going to school," Jackson said. "Lot of this was a white neighborhood then—hostile territory, mysterious, another world. Walked past that white church over there every morning that I couldn't attend. Had to cross some very dangerous thoroughfares, actually. White kids would pass us in school buses, yell things. We didn't have no school buses then, just had to walk it." We finally pulled up at a corner where a low, plain brick building was deposited on a large plot of bare ground. "This was it," Jackson said. "The other school, the one for us. The one that didn't have any grass. They didn't plant any. Didn't mean for grass to grow here, or children to grow, either. Only place for recreation was sliding on the sand on the sidewalk along here. No grass to play on."

As we headed back toward Haynie Street, the road rose past a high stretch of open field, and Jackson said, "Of course, this is where Furman University used to be, the men's campus, before they moved it all out of town. All up on this hill, dorms and classrooms, just across the street from us. Oh, man, did I *dream* about going to school there one day. I couldn't hardly wait. That Frank Selvy, man, he was my idol then." He was referring to a nationally celebrated Furman basketball player of the mid-fifties, who once scored a hundred points in a single game. "Oh, yeah, I was gonna go to *Frank Selvy's* school," and in a softer voice he added, "Which, of course, I could not attend, I realized eventually. Though we lived just across the street, and my grandmother did the washing and ironing for all you other students

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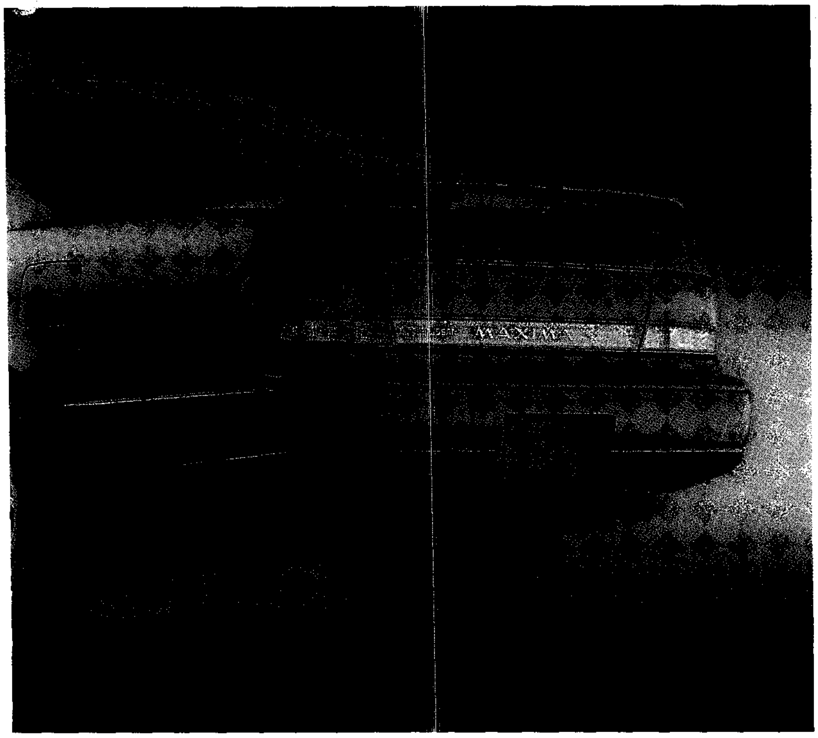

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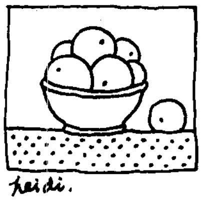
up there." (I had gone to college at Furman, and, during Jackson's 1989 trip to Africa, as we were sitting around one morning in the government guesthouse in Lagos, Jackson abruptly continued, as if only a few seconds had intervened since that observation in Greenville, "I mean, how come you can go to Furman and I can't? Hunh? Why was that? You know, given the basic characteristics of Jesus, *he* couldn't have attended Furman, either. Could he? Wrong complexion, not the right schooling, family poor. Ain't that right? Naw, couldn't've let Jesus in Furman, either.")



A block beyond Furman's former campus, we turned into another narrow street of the neighborhood in which Jackson had first lived, and I recognized, below a wooded hill, the shape of Sirrine Stadium, where Furman still played its football games after it had relocated. "Yeah," Jackson was saying. "When the white people would come to the football game on Saturday afternoons, that was a big deal for us. We'd park the overflow of cars in the yards along here, watch 'em for twenty-five cents. Couldn't get in to watch the game, though, 'less you were selling peanuts and Co'-Cola. Only down there at that end of the stadium, up on the side of that hill, is where blacks could sit." And I suddenly recalled, for the first time in all these years, students at the games—possibly even including me—referring to that hillside beyond the goalposts as "the crows' section." This was one little reminiscence, however, that I could not quite bring myself to mention to Jackson. Instead, I said that it would be ironic if, on one of those Saturdays, he had parked my car. "Probably did," he affably replied, "probably did! Probably in the cards, in the stars!"

Dusk had begun settling over the town as the car finally descended a long drive through the wide, leafy sweeps of a park. "This is Cleveland Park now," Jackson said. "We couldn't use this park. *Public* park, too." Judge Haynsworth had spent quiet Sunday afternoons bird-watching here. Gazing out the window, Jackson spoke on in a barely audible voice. "Softball fields along here, right over there. But we couldn't play softball in them. After we moved to the project, bus would come along here every day, and we'd look out the window at the white kids playing softball. But we couldn't play ball there." A moment later, he pointed out his window and murmured, "Over there, that was the swimming pool, which they did finally desegregate. So blacks could swim in it. But then they put seals in it. That's right, seals. When that didn't work—some blacks just jumped on in there with the seals anyway—they turned it into a garden. Filled it up and covered it over with dirt. Yeah. Beautified that problem, was how they took care of that one."

As the car moved on, Jackson said, "Now the black neighborhood started—started . . . riiiight . . . here. Nickeltown, was called. In Nickeltown now. And right down there, at the end of that street, was our skating rink, since we couldn't go to Cleveland Park. It was the smoothest stretch of pavement we could find."

We started back toward his mother's house, and Jackson reflected, "You know, it's amazing that there're so few blacks now who are openly and verbally hostile, given their experience. There're some whites who still can have the audacity to be unrelenting and unforgiving in their expectations of what black attitudes ought to be these days. But, given the scars on our souls, what amazes me is how *freed up* most blacks actually are about those experiences."

At one point, on a boulevard running along the edges of his old neighborhood, we passed the Ramada Hotel; the marquee at its driveway entrance, illuminated now in the twilight, bore the message "HAPPY BIRTHDAY HELEN JACKSON." "That's where the thing's gonna be for Mama tonight," Jackson said. "Right there at the end of Haynie Street, actually." It was one of those large circle closings in time which Jackson so likes to note.

FOR all the pervasive degradations of Greenville's onetime system of small-town apartheid, Jackson in fact passed his boyhood mostly enclosed in a kind of communal care that he describes now as "a love triangle." He says, "Mother, grandmother here, teacher over here, and preacher over here. Within that love triangle, I was protected, got a sense of security and worth. Even mean ole segregation couldn't break in on me and steal my soul. It protected me long enough until I was able to break out and survive on my own. When it's working, that's what that thing really does."

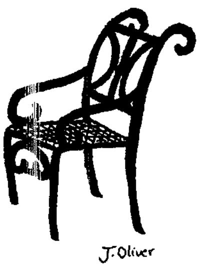
In progressive installments between appointments and flight departures during a passage through Africa (that journey the closing of another, much vaster, indeed ultimate sort of circle, as he kept pointing out), he recalled, "Grandmama and Mama always made me feel I was somebody special, told me I was the Lord's gift to them, you know, always saying, 'You're gonna be somebody. Just hold on.' Then came the first day of school—yeah, in that other building on the corner with no grass—but my mother took me in to my teacher and told her, 'He's in your care.' Teacher said, 'Don't you worry, Miz Jackson, we'll take good care of him.' Principal came in, said, 'It's all right, Miz Jackson, he'll be all right here.' " It produced an impression of a collective watchful attention that a small boy of Jackson's particularly solitary and uncertain circumstances would have found hugely gratifying.

So telling was the effect on him of that collaborative concern among his elders, in fact, that he has been preaching its importance ever since, in his circuit-riding social ministry. "Parents, teachers got to be in it together. If the teacher assigns homework, parent must have the child at home to do the homework. Report-card time, you must go to the school and pick up that report card. Four times a year. I mean, pick it up!"—and he clapped his hands, having become greatly exercised in explaining all this one morning in Lagos, stalking up and down beside a long table and fairly shouting at times. "If a child can go to school thirty-five weeks a year, you can go four times a year to get his report card. You check on your investment stock that much. And your child's the *biggest stock* you got! It's the *parents'* responsibility to get their child educated, and they pay teachers to assist them—teachers are parents' aides, not the other way around. But there must be a thing between the *two* of you. Understand what I'm sayin'? Because your child then knows he can't play the two of you off against each other. Because children are masters of deceit—your little loved one also happens to be a little rascal."

Once, at an assembly of parents at his younger daughter's school, "this black mother was just berating a white teacher," he recounted. " 'I know my son is doing better than you say,' gettin' louder and louder, with her son standin' there beside her, 'bout ten years old, keepin' real quiet. Teacher said, 'Well, whenever I give the class homework, your son comes back saying he couldn't do it because his parents are too poor to buy him pencils and paper.' *'He's lyin'!'* black mother says. *'He's a damn lie!'* I mean, almost hollerin'. *'We always worked!'* 'Well, now, I didn't know that,' teacher said. Course, what the little fella'd been doing, he'd been comin' home and telling his mother how this white teacher was not kind to him. Ten years old, but already caught on to how to play that ole race game, play on the stereotypes. Right about then, the father stepped into the discussion. Looked down at his little boy and said, 'Now, your teacher, here, she won't be havin' that problem with you no more, will she?' Little small voice, 'No, sir.' *'I say, will she?'* 'Nosir, nosir, nosir!' " Jackson clapped his hands again. "Teacher, parents closing that gap! And, when they close that gap, homeboy's in a crossfire. Harsh? Eagles are harsh on eaglets until they can fly. And closing that gap is finally a matter of saving that child. Saving future heartache. On Christmas mornings, shall you be coming downstairs to open gifts around the tree, or shall you be going over to the jail to take yo' chile a cake and cigarettes?"

In his own case, Jackson says, "my mother would tell my teachers, 'Now, if I miss PTA meetings sometimes because I'm working at a job, I'll see you at church on Sunday.' " He explains, "What it was, see, was a transfer of moral authority from my mother to that teacher. And the teacher had *earned* that authority by the way she behaved with my mother at church. There was respect between them."

It was in that third element of the triangle of care around him that the whole arrangement seemed consolidated, confirmed, consecrated. In the black churches of Greenville—simple little shoebox sanctuaries crammed, on Sundays, with congregations of maids, yardmen, teachers, mill laborers, cooks, whose massed voices surged, over a huge measured clapping, through old hymns—there was contained a certain vibrant and all-encompassing democracy that was wholly removed from the structures of weekday lives. "My teacher, for instance, was a college-trained woman, and my mother was not," Jackson says. "But at the church Mother sang in the choir. She was the star there. It was a different sort of reality at Long Branch Baptist every Sunday." In fact, those Sunday-morning church services provided Jackson with his first, idyllic sense of a Blessed Community, a democratic society ordered not by money or professional station but by moral properties. "Only measure was character," Jackson says. "Here Deacon Foster, who might be only a janitor at the school, he can be chairman of the deacon board and sit in the front row, while the principal of the school, who might be an ole drinkin' sinner, he gonna have to sit ten rows back and keep quiet. It's Deacon Foster, guy who can say the most fervent prayers, who got the status *here*. Different kind of reality." And somehow a more momentous one as well. They would all be lifted, on the sweep of the preacher's voice, out of the base gravities of their daily lot and into the grand, ancient scriptural dramaturgies of bondage, suffering, endurance, mercy, redemption; would be spirited right back there again with Joseph in Egypt, Moses before Pharaoh, Herod and John the Baptist, the compassion of Jesus, and his Crucifixion. "That revolutionary Gospel I learned at Long Branch Baptist—I've found no higher truths," Jackson says now. "The values preached by Reverend D. S. Sample are just as real over the rest of the world."


J. Oliver

He was also noticing how the greater reality of those Sundays would be translated back into the everyday lives of the people around him. His mother was working now as a beautician, to supplement Charles Jackson's meagre income. "We never had much at all, of course," Jackson recalls, "but Mama was always helpin' out folks who needed it, would fill out papers for them to get their welfare checks, buy their groceries and have 'em delivered to 'em. Like she did for this old man who lived near us, Mr. Dave, who was illiterate, and had trouble gettin' around. She'd explain to me why she was doin' all that—need

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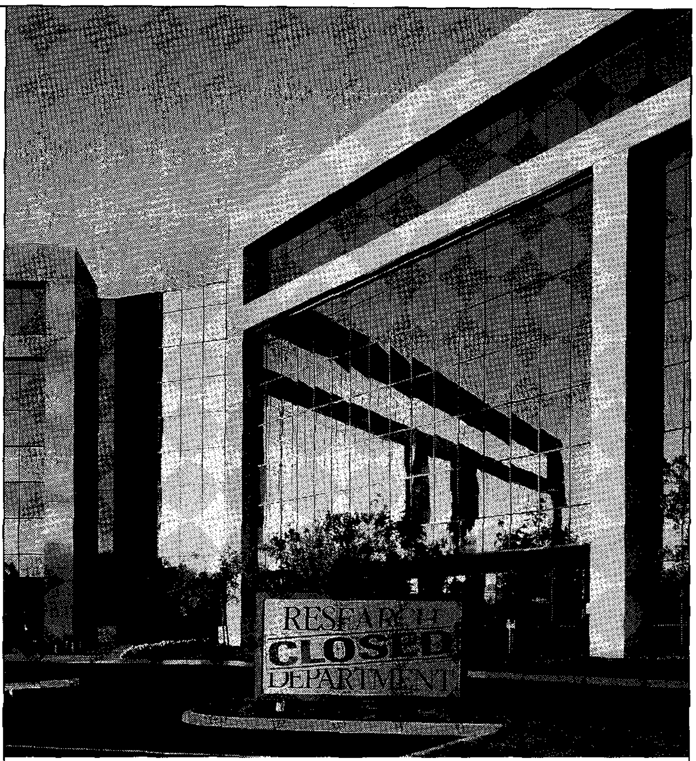

EXCESSIVE LIABILITY AWARDS MAKE IT TOUGH FOR U.S. COMPANIES TO COMPETE.

We are a compassionate society. We want to compensate those who have suffered.

But when our courts expand the traditional concepts of liability, causing defendants to pay excessive compensation, we add to the costs we all pay for goods and services. We encourage companies to stop research and development on new products. And we even make it harder for American companies to compete overseas.

PAYING A HIDDEN TAX.

In reality, the American system of liability has become the source of a hidden tax on our economy—a tax that can account for as much as 50% of the price paid for a product.

What's worse, it has been estimated that this hidden tax amounts to $80 billion a year—a sum equal to the combined profits of the nation's 200 largest corporations.

Our economic competitors' legal systems do not encourage litigation to the extent we do. Consider, for example, that there are 30 times more lawsuits per capita in the U.S. than in Japan.

Is it any wonder that America is having a tough time competing in overseas markets?

UNCERTAINTY STIFLES ENTERPRISE.

The unpredictability of our liability system is also enormously costly to American competitiveness. For example, in a recent survey of CEOs, the Conference Board found that worry about potential liability lawsuits caused 47% of firms surveyed to discontinue one or more product lines. What's more, 25% stopped certain product research and development, and 39% decided against coming out with a new product. Meanwhile, our overseas competitors continue to research and develop new products at an ever-increasing pace.

ARE WE CONTROLLING RISKS OR INCREASING THEM?

When we give a drunk driver the right to sue an automaker or highway engineer for a million dollars after a crash, are we controlling risk?

Or just encouraging risky and careless behavior?

If you are a manufacturer, you can be sued even if your product has state-of-the-art safety features. Even if your customer misused it against your instructions. Even if the risks of misuse were obvious.

When fear of lawsuits causes physicians to limit

lity system is essential if in overseas markets.

services to patients—or worse, to abandon their practice altogether—lack of adequate treatment means greater risks for everyone.

Is this controlling risk or increasing it?

It's an unhealthy and dangerous situation that needs correcting.

WE MUST REFORM OUR "DEEP POCKETS" APPROACH TO LIABILITY.

Specifically, we need to change our approach and base liability suits on fault.

Our current system often encourages the frivolous suing of those with the ability to pay—in other words, those with "deep pockets." But does it make sense to hold such parties entirely liable, even if they were only minimally at fault?

A MORE RATIONAL APPROACH.

Those who suffer economic losses because of another's negligence should be fairly reimbursed. No one could argue with this principle. There should also be just compensation for pain and suffering resulting from real and severe injuries.

But can we afford to continue a system that encourages litigation and financial judgments bearing little direct relationship to fault or to the actual cost of injuries suffered?

Clearly, a better approach is needed.

CONGRESS HAS A ROLE.

Legislation providing a uniform product liability standard would allow American companies to compete without the burdens of excessive liability risks. And this would unclog the courts and put American business in a stronger position as barriers to international trade and investment fall.

There is proposed legislation before Congress dealing with these issues. A solution to the liability crisis is vital to American competitiveness, and Congress can play a role in restoring the right balance.

SO DO THE COURTS.

When all is said and done, our courts are the interpreters of our laws and our values. It's our values as a society that count, especially as reflected in the courts and individual jury decisions.

Together our legislative and judicial branches must recognize the damage being done to American competitiveness from the current liability system. And help America restore the proper balance.

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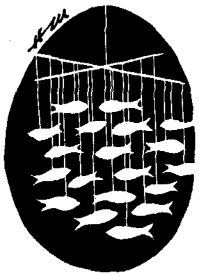
to look out for other folks just like they were one of our own. Straight from that Gospel preached at Long Branch. I remember, then, one Christmas, Mama was sick and out of work, so was my father, had only a little pickup job painting. I knew I wouldn't be gettin' nothing much that Christmas. Fact, we didn't even have hardly enough money for food. Christmas Eve night, time came to go to the church for the Christmas play, where members would exchange gifts and all that. My father was feeling awfully low and discouraged, said we shouldn't be going, we couldn't give any gifts to anybody. But Mama said, 'We can at least go sing in the choir. Can at least add to the congregation.' When we got back to the house that night after church, there were six bags of groceries sittin' on the front porch. Deliveryman had left 'em, we figured, like he did sometimes for people weren't at home when he came. We took the groceries into the house and stored 'em away—meats, chicken, flour, lard, fruit, cookies, I mean all *kinda* stuff. Day or two went by, nobody called for them. All that food, 'bout the only food we had in the house, and Mama wouldn't let us touch any of it. She said, 'They don't belong to us, now, it's somebody else's groceries.' Finally, the old man, Mr. Dave, dropped by, asked if we'd gotten his order. Mama said, 'Oh, yes, we weren't sure exactly who they were for, but we been holding them for you.' He said, 'They for y'all. Knew you were sick and Charlie's been out of work. Figured you could use 'em. Just a little something I wanted to do after all the help you been to me for so long.' He was illiterate, see, couldn't leave any kind of note. Said, 'I thought y'all would just know.' Mama started crying. My father was different about showing his feelings, but he had to go out of the room for a minute or two. Now, you think any child can ever forget an experience like that? All it meant? Isn't in some way changed forever by it? And, man, did we *feast* there for several days! Still the greatest Christmas I've ever had."

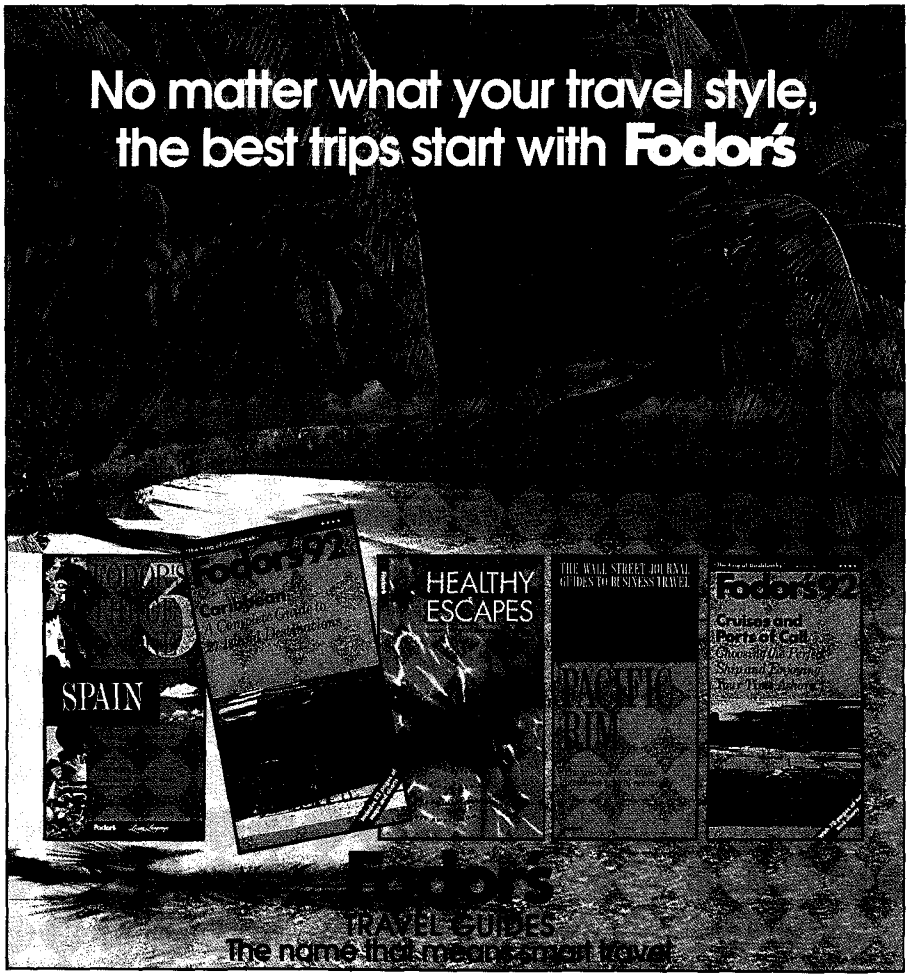


Yet, as he grew up within the sheltering warmths of Greenville's black community, he found himself at the same time having to answer to sternly exacting expectations. "First day in the sixth grade, I'll never forget it. Teacher was Miz Shelton, and she began writing these long words on the blackboard we couldn't understand, never even heard of before. We all looked around and started whispering to each other, 'She got the wrong class. She thinks we the *eighth*-grade class.' Somebody finally called out, 'Uh, Miz Shelton? Those are eighth-grade words. We only the sixth grade here.' She turned around. 'I know what grade you are. I work here. I know what grade I'm teaching. And you'll learn every one of these words, and a lot more like 'em, 'fore this year is over. I will *not* teach down to you. One of you little brats just might be mayor or governor, or even President, some day, and I'm gonna make sure you'll be ready.' And she turned back and went right on writing." At that time, Jackson says, her proposition prompted no glow of possibility in him. "Aim to be governor? Even aim to be mayor, when in Greenville then there wasn't a single African-American on the Board of Education, in the Police Department, the Fire Department? And aim to be President—my *God!*"

Nevertheless, Jackson says, such suggestions inevitably took. "I was taught that even a society of limitations did not have the power to limit your capacity to dream. I was never taught to adjust. My mother, she just never learned to teach me to be inferior." His mother's application to his development may have been additionally energized by her relinquished cultural ambitions. "Mama was very articulate, even though she had left high school after the eleventh grade. She was always into self-improvement and culture and things like that. When I got to high school, she told me I was to join the choir. I was playing football by then, and I told her, 'Mama, look, I'm a football player. Those others choirboys. You know—'s *different*.' 'I understand,' she said. 'I know what you are. But if you that uncertain about your manhood a football uniform won't do a thing for you. When you come out of high school, you gonna have learned how to 'Hallelujah Chorus' and 'Give Thanks Unto Thee,' you not just gonna learn James Brown and The Drifters.' So I got to be able to talk about all that a cappella and allegretto, 'Hallelujah Chorus,' all of that—only at Mama's insistence."

When he speaks now to assemblies of black youths in schools around the country, Jackson will relate, “Mama made me take French in high school, though I could see absolutely no use for it. Neither could my friends. Guys on the football team said, ‘Look, man, in the first place mamas don’t know everything.’ Said, ‘After all, you don’t have none of us on the football team speak French. Chances awfully high you ain’t *ever* gonna have no neighbors who speak French. Yo’ mama can’t speak French *herself.* Man, *fake that thing.*’ So I schemed, managed to finesse it all the way through high school, through college, graduation. Before long, started working with Dr. Martin Luther King. Then—you never know what the future holds, can’t see around the curve to it—Dr. King was murdered, and in time more leadership fell to me. Years later, I get a call one day from Washington, saying six ambassadors from the Sahel region of Africa want to come to Chicago to talk to me about getting help for the drought and famine there. Six African ambassadors, comin’ to *my home.* My mind started thinking about history, going back home to Africa to help save the starving and dying—really a *great* sense of the moment, of this whole *scene* now, feelin’ sort of *good* about myself. Day comes, I look out the window, these ambassadors are gettin’ out of their cars in front of my house, comin’ up the walk to my front door. I go out to meet ’em, and every one of ’em—get this, now—every *one* of ’em is speakin’ *French.* There I am, can’t even understand them, talk to them in their own language. *Caught!* Managed all those years to slide by my mama, slide by my teachers, even got my diploma—but the law finally caught me. What is that law? Sooner or later, you *will* reap what you sow. You got to study those books, my friends.”

In fact, the disciplines in which he was reared by his mother and teachers left him forever after obsessed with the traditional fortitudes of grit, pluck, industry, pertinacity—those staunch verities which, as he saw it, provided his deliverance from the futility and abjectness of the community enclosing him. “I got a sense, early on, that it was possible to escape if you played by certain rules,” he says. “I knew the neighborhood offered no real way out. Downtown business was hardly the way out. Might go to West Point,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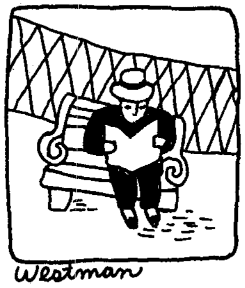
maybe. Still, how far we could go was limited by the barriers of segregation. But I knew those barriers could be breached by education and will, and if you stayed out of personal trouble." And it is that simple homiletics which now largely forms his exhortations to black youths in inner-city schools. Not long ago, at a convocation of students at Jordan High, in the Watts section of Los Angeles, he declared, "God does not make orange juice—God only makes the oranges. You got to peel 'em and squeeze the juice out yourselves. Same way, God gives us all a brain, but you got to squeeze it, exercise it, you got to *use* that brain to draw the genius out of it. If you a good athlete, it's not just that you were born that way 'cause you black—don't believe that racist talk. It's 'cause you *practice* that way. Whatever you do much, you do well."



Indeed, there is a curiously old-fashioned, McGuffey Reader didacticism to his homespun ethic of diligence and probity. "My values come out of a conservative Christian orientation," he insists. "Probably surprise a lot of people to know I think that way, but it's what I really believe, deep down in my soul. When liberals were dismissing drugs as just a personal habit, I was saying it's the No. 1 threat to our national security. When I was arguin' our youth was sufferin' from lack of discipline and growin' decadence, many liberals, quote unquote, were wafflin' on the issues." He goes on, "Issue of corporal punishment in school, that was something I only learned was an issue years later. I wouldn't have even understood what that phrase meant, much less thought to question it. Teachers got to teach by moral authority." Of education he says, "It must be value-oriented. We cannot have a value-free education, an education without vision, without ethics. Absolutely not! Must be a commitment to a thing called character in education." This may seem a slippery principle, actually, placing him not that far from the educational impulses of the fundamentalist right. Nevertheless, he asserts, "The great teachers know that that lectern is a pulpit. That's why they sometimes call it 'the ministry of education.' It's a divine calling, like ministry of the Gospels."

In his own ministry, when he speaks to gatherings of high-school students, he even preaches the sort of sober sexual restraint that one might hear commended in a sermon by Billy Graham. "You say, 'But, Reverend Jackson, the new thing is, sex is a thrill.' Let me tell you, it *always* was. But we not an amoeba or paramecium, we have more than one cell, and we can have more than one thrill. Sex is a thrill, but so is graduating a thrill, going to college is a thrill, becoming mayor, becoming governor"—the students are applauding now—"becoming President! Your *whole life* can be a thrill!" His notions of propriety and fitness can seem at times to take on an almost Victorian stodginess. While he was taping an early pilot version of his first, syndicated television program, he kept presenting, to a deputation of rap performers defending their lyrics with arguments of artistic freedom, such questions as "But do you see any relationship between freedom and responsibility? You accept any responsibility for the impact of what you say?" Even during a visit to the Soviet Union, he went about dispensing admonitions like "Keep expanding your freedoms, by all means, but do not then use those freedoms to be decadent."

IT finally remains something of a mystery exactly how Jackson, an illegitimate, poor, black youth in Greenville's racial caste system, arrived at his sense of some special personal portent—what eventually expanded into his compulsion to make himself into nothing less than a moral hero in the society where he and his people have long been scorned. It was an urge that, as Jackson now puts it, "didn't come to me all at once." He says, "It began more like this low burn that just sort of kept growing.

"There was always an expectation that I would do something. I can't explain it, but I was always aware that there was this exceptional, high expectation factor for me." Part of the reason, he now says, was that even though he was the cast-off child of Noah Robinson, the mere fact that Robinson had fathered him "meant something very important to people in the community"—and obviously, for all the hurt of his rejection, also to him. More, "every social level of the community," as he now remembers it, "seemed to feel they had this special stake in me—the poorest element, because I was born among them, but also the middle-class, the respectable church folks, because they'd helped train me up." What invited that special solicitude, it would appear, was that even as a boy he had a flourish of some particular promise. When the first television sets began appearing in the neighborhood, around the time he was nine, he took to dropping in on nearby houses to read out for illiterate grownups the titles and datelines of the newsreel broadcasts—announcing the headlines of upheavals and pageantries all over the world with a gusto that would prompt these first, small audiences of his, crowded into dim rooms, to marvel, "This boy gonna *be* something someday," and to drop dimes and quarters in the paper cup he always brought along with him. Such tributes from his elders, however perfunctory, produced in him flushes of great self-expectation. By the time he had reached adolescence, he reportedly proclaimed to Noah Robinson at one of their chance encounters, "I'm a born leader!"

But the barren claustrophobia of life in Greenville's black community remained unstirred even by the Supreme Court's 1954 school-desegregation order, Jackson recalls; it registered there as some imponderable, remote event, with little immediate meaning. Far more momentous were the two occasions, in the fifties, when Jackie Robinson passed through Greenville. The first time, he was scheduled to perform in an exhibition game in town, but it was rained out, and he never got off the train. Several years later, when Robinson visited Greenville on behalf of the N.A.A.C.P., he was refused permission to use the bathroom for whites at the airport. That incident, in fact, provoked a local black minister to mount a small protest demonstration, and it stunned most of Greenville's blacks no less than the town's white population. Jackson's own parents, he remembers, were not a little scandalized. "It was like 'Why he want to raise up a fuss like that? Just what's he think he's doing? His business is 'spose to be preaching the Gospel.' I could tell it sort of frightened them, you know, especially my stepfather."

In the South then, ministers were about the only figures of consequence and authority in the black community, and that small elect presided over their people's lives in the manner of the tribal high priests of the Old Testament. Accordingly, Jackson says, when he was in his early twenties he informed Noah Robinson that he had been visited by a dream: "I dreamed I was a preacher, leading people through the rivers of the waters." In his own church, he had emerged as an assertive youth, regularly attending state Sunday-school conferences and returning to present reports to the congregation with an expansive volubility in which the lisping stammer that had marked him since his childhood began to disappear. "Church was like my laboratory," he says, "my first actual public stage, where I began to develop and practice my speaking powers with more and more confidence. After a while, got to where you couldn't hardly hold me back." He soon found that while listening to other preachers in church "I'd sit there watching them, but all I was really seeing was myself up there in that pulpit."

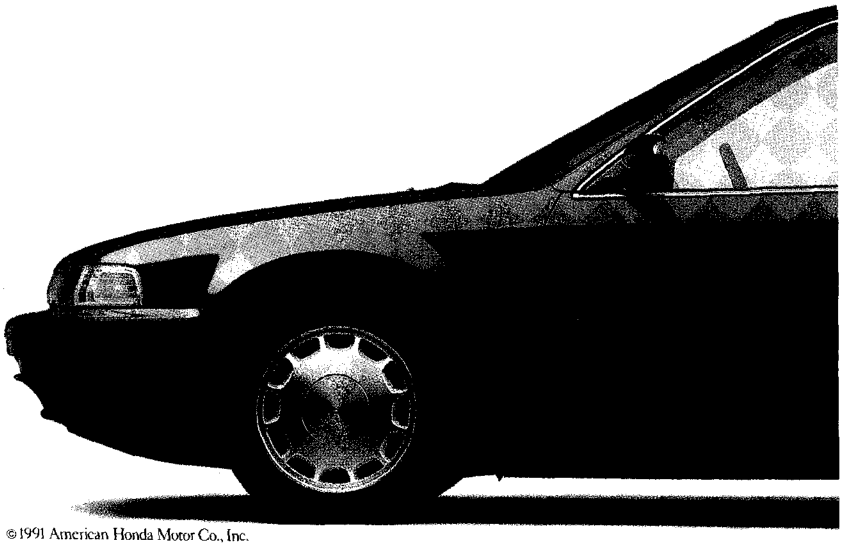
In other public arenas as well, he became a virtuoso. In grade school, he had been outsized not only in his hunger for notice but in his sheer physical bulk, looming over his classmates. At Sterling High, he made the football team in his freshman year, playing with eighteen-year-olds and he eventually became the star quarterback. (He was also the pitcher on the baseball team.) It was the strategy of Sterling's football coach to design the whole team's play around the quarterback, an arrangement that Jackson found not uncongenial. And it was in his performances on Thursday nights (Friday nights were reserved for the city's white high-school games) that Jackson came by his first true public magnification, on the brightly lit field of Furman's stadium, where he had once parked cars for the college's Saturday games and peddled peanuts and Cokes to the white spectators. His swashbuckling play began to attract the curiosity of the Greenville *News*; in one game, he shifted himself to fullback for a while and ran for three touchdowns. He became, in fact, a local sensation. At the request of the photographer sent out by the *News*, who on particularly chilly nights wished to get back to the paper as quickly as possible, Jackson on his first plays would take the ball himself and obligingly gallop straight toward the photographer's flashbulb on the sidelines, on as many successive swings as required, until the photographer shouted an O.K. to him.

During these years, he developed into something of a glad young prince of Greenville's black community, appearing at such social occasions as weddings arrayed in a shimmery tuxedo jacket and vanilla-white trousers, as if he were actually the bridegroom, and even showing up for school in suits and ties. Snappy, ebullient, he was called J.J. by friends. He had also come to be noted for a rampaging glibness. Meanwhile, he remained diligent in his classwork, taking along his schoolbooks on team trips to neighboring towns. In all, he says, "I was afraid to fail. An all-around excellence in sports and academics, being a first-string athlete and an honor student, could protect you from feeling certain forms of rejection." Now, instead of the schoolyard taunts of his childhood, he began to hear assurances that he was fated for great things.

But all these intimations of a special promise were finally balked by segregation. Jackson had a counterpart of sorts on the football and baseball teams of all-white Greenville High, a celebrated quarterback and heavy-clubbing catcher named Dickie Dietz, and between them there developed, as Jackson now likes to cast it, a "media parallel" of dual headlines in the local paper. But the possibility of any directly measuring contest between them was denied by the town's implacable racial division. "I always wanted to play against Dickie Dietz, but I knew I never could. It was one more way the system acted to contradict your qualifications."

The discriminations were usually more direct. On a senior-class trip to the state capitol, in Columbia, "they wouldn't even let us take a class picture on the lawn," Jackson remembers. "Not talking about inside the building where the governor and all the legislators were—but not even out there on the *lawn*. It was like we were some reject people kept under rule in an occupied zone. Mean, why'd we have to sit in the back of the bus? Use the back door of cafés? Couldn't sit at the lunch counters downtown? Couldn't go to the theatres downtown, couldn't go to a

From beginning



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white church? Hunh? Why was that? Why all the bus drivers, department-store clerks, supermarket clerks, all the policemen and firemen, all were white? Why *we* couldn't be policemen and firemen? Why no black judges? Why no blacks on television? Movies only about white characters? Why no blacks in Congress or the Senate or the state capitol? Mean, *why*? You felt the whole society was out to just *erase* you." He would occasionally engage in furtive retaliations. While working as a waiter in the dining room of a patrician hotel downtown, he says, "I'd serve people sometimes who'd be just so *mean*, but I soon found if I kept serving them with a genteel efficiency you could melt 'em after a while, they'd start letting their guard down." If they didn't, he would resort to quick little spits into the soup of those white customers before emerging from the kitchen and politely setting the bowl before them. "Hardly call it even, though. Spit in their soup while they burn our churches."

The depth of the desolation that segregation worked on black youths like Jackson is indicated by the excitement with which, a few years later, at college, he and his fellow black students received word of a United Nations study of racial comparisons. "The big preoccupation for us at school was whether we were actually inferior or not," Jackson relates. "We'd sit around discussing books by Margaret Mead and others. Any anthropological study showing us not to be inferior was very important stuff to us. So when this UNESCO report came out stating that, scientifically, people of African descent were not inherently inferior—*man!* That was a big thing, we took that paper and quoted from it, went around giving speeches on it everywhere. I mean, the *United Nations* said it. It was *validated*—we were *not* inferior!" There was the same extravagance to his rejoicing over comments in a television address around that time by President Kennedy: "He came on, said, What's happening to Negroes in America is not only not right under the law, it is also morally wrong. Great godamighty, man—*morally* wrong! I choked up, started just *quivering*. I'd never heard a white politician in my life before say something like that, talk about the moral foundations of our society. He took it into another dimension with that." Stirred again by the recollection even these many years later, Jackson smacked his hands and let loose a light, amazed whistle: "*Morally* wrong—my *God!*"

What became progressively more unendurable about Greenville's racial order was simply its brusque affront to Jackson's growing sense of his possibilities. In 1959, after leaving for his first year of college, in the remote and supposedly more open latitudes of the University of Illinois, he returned to Greenville by train for the Christmas break. "It was the longest I'd ever been away from home, and it felt awfully good to be going back for that little while. But while I was home I was supposed to put together a speech that had been assigned me for a speech contest—something to do with patriotism, as I remember it. I had this list of over a dozen books I needed to use to prepare it." Once back in Greenville, though, by conditioned instinct he first sought the books not at the city's main public library but at the McBee Avenue Colored Branch. None of them were to be found there, and the McBee

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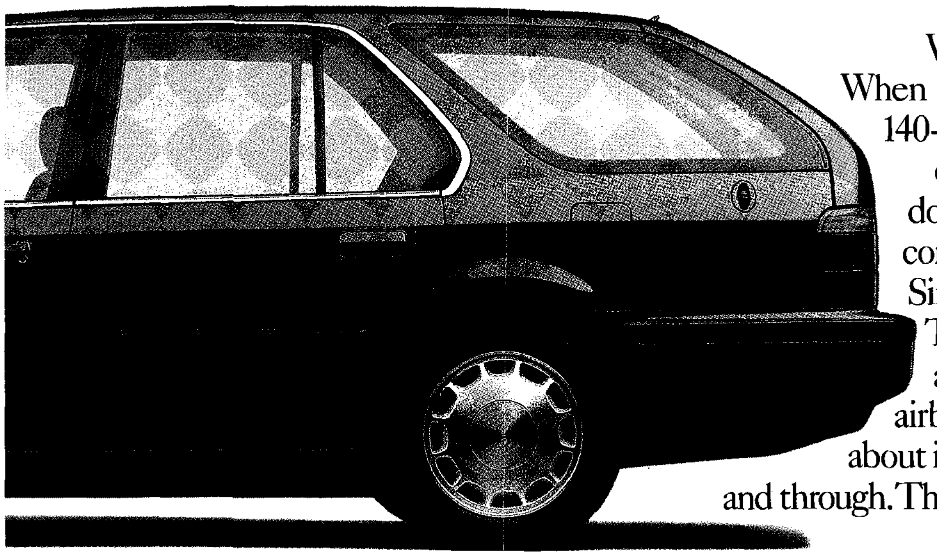

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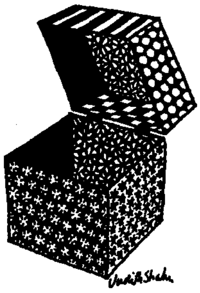
Avenue librarian sent him, with an explanatory note, to the white library downtown, taking the precaution of phoning ahead for him. But, after walking the mile and a half or so to the Greenville Public Library, he discovered, when he entered, two policemen waiting beside the librarian's desk, quietly talking to her. She took his note, glanced at the list of books on it, and told him that none were available there at the moment. "I asked her if I couldn't just go back in the shelves and look for them, way back in the stacks where nobody would even see me. She said, 'You simply cannot have them.' Said she'd have to have me arrested if I didn't leave." On the long walk back to his house, Jackson says, "I felt like crying, I was so angry, humiliated. Furman, Clemson students could use that library, even white high-school students in town could use that library—but *I* couldn't. It's hard to really describe my feeling. It *still* hurts, still enrages, like I *still* can't believe it." What it meant, Jackson says, was "I had to break off my Christmas vacation four days early to go back to Illinois to get that speech done. I remember riding that train alone back to Atlanta and to Nashville and up to Chicago and on the bus back to Urbana, thinking the whole way, That library's public. And when I get back home this summer it's gonna go public for real. I'm gonna use that library. It wasn't any matter of Gandhi or Dr. King then, it was just my own private pride and self-respect."

That obstinate self-regard had been transmitted to him, in no small degree, by his mother and stepfather. "Despite everything, they'd always had this great sense of personal dignity," Jackson says. "It was maybe their most important gift to me." He still recounts with delight one Sunday afternoon when his stepfather took him and his half brother to a bank building downtown where he was then working as a janitor. After first pointing out how "he'd sometimes find money they left in the trash baskets to trap him, test him," he was showing them how to operate the floor-buffing machine when "his boss came in with some of his buddies, called to him, 'You, Charlie, c'mere.' Father said, 'Be there in a minute.' Boss called him again—showing off for his buddies, you know—and said if he didn't come right away he'd kick him. Father said, 'Well, you might do that,' and took this bunch of keys off his belt and handed them to the guy, 'so you better take this job back before I get in trouble, 'cause if you *do* try kicking me you'll have only one leg left after it.' And he took me and my brother with him on out the door." As it turned out, the effect of that flare of indignation by his stepfather, Jackson says, was "not only did his boss insist he stay on but he gave him a strong recommendation when the Post Office job opened up."

But later, as the civil-rights movement began gathering over the South and Jackson made his first ventures into student activism—in which, he says, "I was simply carrying out my mama and daddy's sense of dignity"—his parents found, as commonly happens with values passed between generations, that dignity unexpectedly taking a form in their son which was deeply discomfiting to them. "While they had this powerful sense of pride, that didn't translate for them into marches and getting arrested." Tensions began to crackle, especially between Jesse and his stepfather: "His thing was fear. Somebody gonna get killed." The summer following his rebuff at the city library, Jesse did in fact return there, and, along with seven other black students, staged a small sit-in. He was duly arrested, and his release on bail was filmed by a local television-news camera. Back at home on a Saturday afternoon, he was in the kitchen making a sandwich, as he tells it, while his stepfather was sitting in the living room watching television: "Then he came into the kitchen, said, 'How things been, son?' Very calm, you know. 'Just fine,' I said. Then he said, still just as quiet and level, 'I work hard for this family, you agree? Your mother, too, doing those ladies' hair? Well,' he said, 'I just been watchin' y'all down there at the jail talkin' 'bout not being able to use the library, not being able to eat downtown. See that 'frigerator? Enough food in there for you? You ever had to go without a meal around here? Got enough clothes to wear? Thing is, when you out there talkin' 'bout you got to go to jail 'cause you can't get enough to read or eat someplace, that's sort of a *reflection* on me and your mama. Know you full of a lot of ideas about what all you think ain't right and all, but I don't want you to be bringing that trouble around here. I don't think you ever quite thought how it could affect this family. So if you can't adjust to the situation here maybe you ought to just go away on from here.' "

Jackson managed to construe for himself an explanation for that chilling rebuke: "It was very painful for him, see, to have to say that to me. It was really his love for me, because of his fear of the consequences of what I'd begun doing. After all, people were getting shot in those days, homes bombed." He also offers one of his vaguely mystical reflections to account for the episode: "It's the points of pain in life, you know? They lie along the borderlines, points of pain, along the outer limits. At birth, the pain indicates something new and great is happening. When a society or a person is growing, the points of pain are the points of transition into a new life. Can't happen without the pain."



Through the following years, arguments continued to flare up between Jesse and his stepfather about the movement into which Jesse had pitched himself. In that reach for a final, full legitimacy, he had made himself something of an alien in his own home. To Jesse's suggestions that his stepfather's rightful place, like his own, was marching alongside Martin Luther King, Charles Jackson replied with cynical remarks about King that were not very different from what could be heard in many white households at the time. "He'd say, 'Ah, he's just marchin' to be seen. Just wants to be out there marchin' for something is all.' Or, on Vietnam, you could give him seven reasons why King said he was against the war, but he'd say, 'What's any preacher know about the Vietnam War?' I'd come back, 'Well, just gave you seven reasons he said he was against it—he didn't say he was just *guessing*.' But seemed like he just had to attack him. *Had* to, 'cause he couldn't afford what it would mean, at that point in his life, supporting what King was doing."

Even so, in the last years before Charles Jackson's death, in 1979, "he became very proud when I started appearing on magazine covers—*Jet*, *Time*," Jackson says. "He'd take that magazine straight down to the postmaster, and show it to the people he

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was working with—'*Y'all* ain't ever talked to no President or been on the front of no magazine around here.'" It was only in the grace of Jackson's public emergence that, for the first time since Charles Jackson had taken over his household, they reached a kind of closeness.

ACTUALLY, when Jesse set out for college at the University of Illinois, it was as the subject of surprising solicitudes on the part of that white order in Greenville from which he had long felt outcast. He had been admitted to Illinois, in the first place, through the intercession of Furman University's football coach, who had admired Jackson's Thursday-night performances in the college's stadium, and arranged for Illinois to give him a football scholarship. And, before Jackson left Greenville, Judge Haynsworth called him into his chambers and pronounced an official blessing upon him—to the effect that he had proved himself a worthy boy, a source of pride to his parents, and if he kept his head clear and bent to his books he would fare fine.

Jackson's own ambitions as he headed for Illinois were distinctly personal, an eagerness for self-improvement more than for any social militancy. At Urbana, he immediately enclosed himself in a world of studying, football, social sporting; he joined a black fraternity. Out of his old avidity to belong, he seemed to be pursuing, as a college student now, that full normalcy of life that had been denied him from birth; he would enter the larger society around him at last. All it required, he assumed, was the diligence and enterprise and confidence in which he'd been schooled by his teachers in Greenville. "I thought that I was doing everything right," he remembers.

Soon, though, misgivings arose. He wasn't allowed to play quarterback—for racial reasons, he has claimed (a recollection that has undergone modifications over the years). At any rate, Jackson says, leaflets were slipped into the mailboxes of the black athletes on campus warning them that they were at Illinois only to play ball, and "not to socialize" with the white coeds there. When some black players complained about the admonition to the athletic director, Jackson says, he stunned them by recommending that they heed it. Steadily, almost casually, similar affronts accumulated. Black students were not allowed into a concert by the Count Basie band, while, Jackson says, at a party given by his fraternity the next weekend "all we had for music was playing those little ole scratchy 45s."

Before long, a cold realization came over him that "all that time I'd been imagining Illinois had to be different from Furman and Clemson and those places down South, it wasn't at all—same thing, just way off somewhere else." When his speech class voted him one of three students to be sent to an oratory competition in Houston, his professor designated him as an alternate. He wound up speaking anyway, when one of the other students withdrew—and while two of the judges accorded him close to the 9.0 perfect mark, Jackson says, the third dropped him five points lower, with the notation "Negro dialect."

Only a few months into his freshman year at Illinois, he had drifted into a deepening dislocation. His classwork began to falter. Feeling himself now merely one of an isolated minority on campus which was held in low regard and subject to not infrequent derision, he floundered on in a distress all the more harrowing because "we were supposed to be part of that breakthrough generation for our race," he says. "Supposed to be representing our race there. Couldn't hardly bear the idea of failing and disappointing our people." That year at Illinois, which had begun with such hope, turned into an ordeal, he now confesses, that "came close to breaking my spirit."

Finally defeated in his first real attempt to move into the society at large, he forsook Illinois—with, for the rest of his life, a wariness about "letting yourself get overwhelmed and lost in the majority mainstream." Retreating to the South, he chose "the sanctuary," as he describes it, of North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College, a rather modest, mostly black institution in Greensboro, North Carolina. It was in some ways like a return to the snug, insulated milieu of his high-school days. There, he cheerfully absorbed himself again in a private life, applying himself to his studies, playing football, and soon becoming the school's celebrity quarterback and a social bravo on campus, jaunty in narrow-brimmed hats and plaid sports jackets, an energetic fraternity fellow. (At a convention of the black fraternity

All we need is your John Hancock right here. As agreed, she gets the house, the chariot, and custody of the kids. You get to keep the lion skin.
HERCULES UNCHAINED

Omega Psi Phi, he got himself elected to a national post bearing the title of Second Vice-Grand Basileus.) He was eventually elected A. & T.'s student-body president.

A few months before Jackson arrived in Greensboro, students from A. & T. and a black women's college, Bennett, had begun a series of lunch-counter sit-ins that would rapidly spread to other cities. One student organizer later recalled to William H. Chafe, a historian of the Greensboro civil-rights movement, "We needed Jesse as a football player the girls loved . . . the president of the student council." What is surprising, though, is that for a long time Jackson kept himself carefully apart from the immense moral drama rising around him, grimly resisting all efforts by other students to enlist him in the sit-ins. "They were determined to get me to be a part of it, kept challenging me, but I expressed absolutely *no* interest in that business," he says. "I just wasn't into what they were into. Said, 'Point isn't sitting in, it's standing up.' I kept criticizing the movement from a distance like that." But when, after a lull, demonstrations resumed in the fall of 1962—suddenly reaching beyond lunch-counter sit-ins to a profusion of demands, such as integration of all public facilities and equity in employment—Jackson was gradually pulled in. He agreed to attend a meeting of the campus chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and even though he spoke only a few words, he showed up for a second meeting, at which, he remembers, "Somebody stood up and turned to me and said, 'Jesse Jackson, now you been having so many criticisms about what we doing, just what's *your* point of view? C'mon, tell us what *you* think we ought to be doing.' They sort of lured me on into it that way."

A few months earlier, he had begun dating Jacqueline Davis Brown, a coed whose childhood had been as marginal as his. When Jackie was a small child, her mother was a farmworker who picked beans in Florida for fifteen cents an hour; Jackie, the oldest of five children, had never known her father. But out of that stark girlhood she had somehow developed into a hardily self-assured and assertive young woman, with a lively brightness. On the A. & T. campus, she was conspicuously more spirited and militant than Jackson, the campus gallant, had ever thought of being; they met, in fact, when she asked Jackson to work with her on a paper on why Red China should be admitted to the United Nations. They were quickly taken with each other. Several months later, Jackie found that she was pregnant—she has since suggested it was a deliberate design of Jackson's, to hasten her into marrying him—and they were married on New Year's Eve of 1962. The first of their five children, a daughter they named Santita, was born a little over six months later.

Meanwhile, as the demonstrations continued, Jackson came to feel around him that magnetic field of special expectations familiar to him from his childhood. "One thing is, people've always seemed to look at me expecting me to make something happen, to do something big," he says. "They've refused to let me stay small, you know?" It was that bracing sensation which, against his own inclinations, ultimately drew him into the movement. After joining CORE, he and other student leaders were called to a meeting with an A. & T. administrator, who, Jackson says, "told us he believed in civil rights, just like we did, but said he'd gotten a call from the state capitol in Raleigh. 'They told me if I don't do something to stop these demonstrations we'll lose our accreditation, your diplomas won't be any good.' Said, 'I can't tell y'all to stop demonstrating. But I know y'all've worked awfully hard to have your degrees count, your parents sacrificed a lot. So it's up to y'all.' Dropped his little number on us, and then left us sitting there." Later that day, at a conference at a church from which a mass march was to set out for downtown, "we were still debating among ourselves. Students were waiting outside with their toothbrushes, ready to go. And all of a sudden everybody's turning toward *me*. 'What we ought to do?' I was just a junior then, but there was like all this pressure upon me from the other students. 'You got to say something to them out there. You can explain it.' We went outside, at least thirteen hundred students out there, and we got up on the church porch. Some others talked first, and I looked out at all those people and felt such a—I don't know, we'd just had this serious challenge about our accreditation—felt such a sense of obligation. Felt so *alone* in that crowd. But it was 'Not my will but Thine be done.' My will was to go back to the campus. But I couldn't, 'cause I knew, as a quarterback, you can never choose the path of having no confidence. Came my time to speak, I said, 'History is upon us. This generation's judgment is upon us. Demonstrations without hesitation! Jail without bail! Let's go forward!' And we moved on out."

Thus Jackson began to discover the exhilarations of his public effect, the power of his tolling oratory. "It was like it took me outside of myself," he remembers. When a number of Bennett students were among those who were jailed after a demonstration, he was appointed to serve as marshal for a protest march; he appealed to A. & T. athletes to join him. "These big football players, you know. 'Not gonna get involved in that mess, not gonna take this nonviolence shit.' But I said, 'We got to go down there and help out the sisters at Bennett, we can be the *leaders* of this thing.' " Seeing about fifty of the athletes following Jackson across the campus, other students came milling out of the dorms. "Result was we had more than two thousand marching downtown that night." And Jackson found himself heading the entire procession. With that, he was wholly caught up in the high theatre of the demonstrations.

As it happened, those demonstrations roughly coincided with the tumult under way on the streets of Birmingham—the campaign in Greensboro proceeding like an atmospheric reflection of that more dramatic confrontation led by Martin Luther King, Jr., some four hundred miles away. "Truth is," Jackson now claims, "Birmingham had the fire hoses and bombings, but the demonstrations in Greensboro were really bigger." In any case, he was being assiduously tutored now in the elements of King's vision by several A. & T. professors, especially Samuel Proctor, once King's classmate at Boston University, who had become president of A. & T. in 1960. "He kept throwing King up to me," Jackson says. "How King was able to do what he was doing 'cause he was using these larger concepts of theology and history. 'He's prepared himself for this. He's not down there in Birmingham just talkin', he's *relatin'* those concepts to the whole of society.' " Soon Jackson was exploring for himself how King's "moral dynamics" could be deployed, particularly within the folk values of Southern culture. During one demonstration outside a cafeteria, he says, "police finally were moving in to arrest us, and we kneeled and started saying the Lord's Prayer. Police all took off their caps and bowed their heads. Can't arrest folks *prayin'*. We finished, they started for us again. We stood up and started singing 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' They stopped, put their hands over their heart. Can't arrest folks singing the national anthem. We were touching something bigger, see, that we both respected. Opening up the moral terms of the situation. Went on

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for, like, half an hour, until we got tired of it and got arrested."

He also began to acquire a canniness for a certain tactical, situational jujitsu. At rallies, he would bawl forth such predictions as "We won't stop until we get what we want! We'll be there tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow! We'll *take over* the city of Greensboro!" Having invoked these dire prospects, he would then nimbly step in to act as mediator between the students and Greensboro's white power system. He was given to striking out on his own, independent of the rest of the movement's leadership. As he now explains it, "I had my popular base with the students, while I kept my position in CORE, had a base there, too, as an option." But his predilection for solo performances occasioned the same irritations then as it would through his ensuing career.

A more profound illumination came to him when the Greensboro police, having run out of jail space, herded some four hundred students into the dilapidated wards of an abandoned polio hospital that had been built to hold only a hundred and twenty-five occupants. Jackson led a march there and found classmates crammed against the windows for air. Several shouted to him, past a mass of police dogs and troopers, "We dyin' from the heat in here, man. You got to help us. Don't let us perish!" Jackson began weeping, he relates, and bellowed back, "We'll get you out, they can't stop us, we'll set you free!" They were, in fact, soon released. That experience, Jackson now says, was "a revolutionary moment in my life." Up to then, all his personal desperations and aggrievements had found no comprehensive "language of action," as he puts it, "to confront the general condition that your individual plight was just one part of." Out of that experience arose his apostolic ambition "to spend my life working as an agent to transform the outer structures of society, the inner structures of people, to bring about a new Heaven and new Earth."

Finally, on a smoldering June night, after Jackson had led a march downtown that flooded the streets around City Hall, a warrant was issued for his arrest, on a charge of inciting to riot. That was all it took for the movement's other leaders, whatever their prior feelings about Jackson, instantly to collect around him. With them he arranged for his arrest to take place when he emerged from a mass meeting at a church, before a rapidly convoked company of newspaper reporters and television cameras. This was the nation's first glimpse of him—a neat, self-possessed youth with a precociously debonair mustache and, already, a certain cinematic incandescence about him. He was notably taller than the officers taking him into custody, a procedure he submitted to with a strangely solemn, flat, wide-eyed gaze. His jailing was followed by the hasty distribution of some ten thousand handbills headlined "YOUR GREAT LEADER HAS BEEN ARRESTED," another church mass meeting, attended by about a thousand supporters cheering denunciations of his arrest from the pulpit, and an enormous, noisy march through the center of Greensboro. Jackson could hear the uproar from his cell. "What did I feel? Most of all, felt peace. Felt at peace." Before he was released, he managed to sketch a "Letter from a Greensboro Jail," in emulation of the

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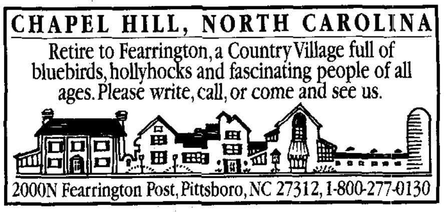
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already famed epistle of King's in Birmingham.

What he sensed now was that, after casting about for so long as an outsider, he had at last found a form of belonging that answered, with grandness, the uncertainties of his origins on Haynie Street. "That's what the Jesus story is all about," Jackson will now say, paraphrasing a New Testament passage. "He who loses his life in the great truth I offer shall find a greater life." Accordingly, no criticism offends Jackson more than that ascribing his aspirations simply to the subjective, to the compulsions of ego: "That stuff comes from people got the sort of mind that can't conceive of anything beyond personal self-interest. It's all they know, all that makes *them* run, so they keep trying to make you that little, too." Instead, "the authority isn't yourself but—who was it said it?—I am He who sent me," he goes on. "So bigger than *who* I am is *whose* I am. If you clear on that, you at the center of a much wider whole." Some might consider that this still amounts to Jackson's ambition performing a kind of altruistic flimflam on itself, an extravagantly liberating sublimation. Nevertheless, what he realized in Greensboro, he maintains—what ignited him and propelled him on, even to his Presidential adventure—was "the enormous strength I could tap into by giving myself over" to "God's truths in history," as he puts it. "Surrendering yourself to that—to struggle for your people, for *all* the people—you get bigger than yourself. Choosing to be selfless, you expand your life beyond the ordinary."

JACKSON's actual course toward that end was still erratic. After graduating from A. & T., he withdrew from the turmoils of the movement—"I just wanted to get away from that active scene I was in, for a few years of study"—and, supplied with a Rockefeller scholarship, once more headed North for Illinois, in the fall of 1964, to enter Chicago Theological Seminary. Even so, on arriving there with his wife and first child and depositing their sparse belongings in rented quarters, he sat on the edge of a bed and broke into tears.

For a time at A. & T., he had mildly entertained notions of becoming a lawyer. "The models for change I knew then were basically lawyers. King was a minister, but he was special, a category of his own. Never could become *that*, I thought then." Nevertheless, his professors had presented King to him as an example of the ministry's efficacy in precipitating social regeneration: "They kept telling me the seminary would be much broader than law school, because it involved everything—poetry, history, sociology, philosophy, the *whole* picture. So I went to Chicago to learn how to do without the law to change society, change it in deeper ways."

Many years later, while winging about Africa, he amplified on the original rationale that had taken him into the ministry, in the course of recalling anticlerical sentiments that he had confronted in marathon sessions in the past with Marxist leaders like Castro, Ortega, Mugabe: "Most of those guys had religious backgrounds, you know. What is Marxism, anyway, but a reaction by guys coming out of very strong Judaic-Christian traditions to the bitter exploitation of people? Now, when they go into that godless, classless society thing, that's where we part company. 'Cause I see God's hand moving in history. But when they were fighting their revolutions they found the mainline, traditional church fighting *against* them, *for* those ruling powers exploiting the people. And, having come through some of that myself, I could kind of understand what they were saying. It was part of my own struggle about going to the seminary. Mean, even the black church had to a great degree a theology that simply accommodated the culture. It'd adjusted, preaching what was essentially a leftover slave theology. But if the church is only an extension of the culture, it only embellishes and reinforces the culture instead of transforming it. If it can't deal with truths higher than the habits of the society of the day, it's salt that's lost its savor. 'Member, 'bout the time I was going to the seminary, people'd gotten all agitated about that book 'Is God Dead?' Well, the point at which the church is not moving for justice, not feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, then in that church God *is* dead. Your brothers and sisters bein' oppressed because of the color of their skin, people and little chil'ren gettin' blown up, and you preach a sermon like it ain't even happenin'? So from my own experience I could understand what Castro and Ortega and those guys were talking about. But I was fortunate to have a Martin Luther King as an example of the alternative to the traditional church. I mean, 'spose if all I'd had was Falwell and Swaggart and Jim Bakker—that was *the church*! 'Spose to identify with *that*?"

He had entered the seminary, though, with circumscribed expectations: "I always meant to come back down to Greenville and take a church, just work from my own church, sort of like King had done. With Jackie and the baby, I stayed away from any high-level activity. Stayed lost in those books." He also managed to get a job as a bridge-toll collector in Chicago after paying a respectful call on Mayor Richard Daley, to whom he had been commended in a letter from North Carolina's Governor Terry Sanford. (Jackson had briefly worked for Sanford after his junior year, on a projected series of black forums for state educational television.) Then, after presenting himself to Chicago's black publishing baron John Johnson, he acquired another job, hustling *Ebony* and *Jet* to sidewalk newsstands, in the course of which he became streetwise in the city's black neighborhoods. "Daley saw a toll collector, Johnson saw a communicator," Jackson says. Meanwhile, at the seminary, as the expanding movement in the South increasingly occupied the national consciousness, "other students began to embrace me, as if waiting for me to bring energy to the student body," Jackson says. "Which was strange, since I was just a freshman. They knew I'd been leading demonstrations down at A. & T. But I held back, kept away from getting into that scene again. It wasn't why I'd come up there. I mostly hung close to those books. Until that Sunday of the Selma bridge."

ON the evening of Sunday, March 7, 1965—only some six months after his arrival at the seminary, and while Jackie was in Greenville with his family, awaiting the birth of their second child—Jackson was sitting by himself, watching the late news, when he saw the long, unfolding tableau of Alabama troopers trampling forward with flailing clubs through a toppling column of black marchers. "Was like all those years in Greenville, everything that had built up in me, it just blew up." Two days later in Selma, James Reeb, a white Unitarian minister and activist from Boston, was severely beaten by unknown assailants, and subsequently died of his wounds. That Sunday evening, Jackson remembers, "I couldn't hardly sleep." Early the next morning, he went barging into the student cafeteria, leaped atop a table, and began baying forth what he describes as "a challenge to everybody there." His appeal was "how we'd been studying the cost of discipleship, and all that sort of thing. Now a time had come to validate with our lives what all we'd been studying about. Who was gonna go with me down to Selma? And about thirty of 'em took off with me down there—a whole cavalcade of cars. Most of 'em white, too." Among them were five of the seminary's professors.

In Selma, Jackson abruptly materialized among the gathering pilgrims and, already in full-pitch motion, plunged about, offering his services to workers in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, even pontificating on his own to random sidewalk assemblies. It suggested some mysterious fury of auditioning. King's aides were startled to discover him, an unknown and seemingly sourceless youth, vociferously dispensing instructions to marchers from the steps of Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, which served as the control center for the movement. One reporter later recalled, "I thought it was strange, when he was not on the S.C.L.C. staff and had not been included in any strategy meetings. He just seemed to come from nowhere." Nevertheless, his impromptu Roman-candle performances of oratory and his scampering eagerness to perform any stray errand, while providing no slight puzzled annoyance to King's aides, soon caught the eye of Ralph Abernathy, King's close associate since Montgomery. When they met, Jackson immediately asked Abernathy to install him on the S.C.L.C. staff. Abernathy agreed, at the least, to take him in for a talk with King.

At one point, Jackson and the Reverend C. T. Vivian, a leader of the S.C.L.C.'s campaign in the city, were forced to take refuge in a housing project, fleeing police who had broken up a demonstration. As Jackson remembers it, "we just ran up to one door, and when some children answered we said, 'Is your mama at home?' They said yes, and when she came down we begged her to let us

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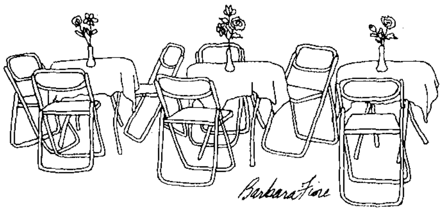
in.” The woman consented and, once they were inside, asked if they were with Dr. King. “We said we were, and then she asked us again, ‘Are you *sure* you with Dr. King?’ We said yes again, and she said, ‘I know who killed Reeb.’ We tried to get her to tell us who it was, but all she said was that she was a waitress in a restaurant, and had seen a man go out and come back a few minutes later carrying a bloody stick, and then she heard about Reeb. She said she knew he had to be involved, but she could tell only Dr. King who he was. Later, we took her to Dr. King, and he told the F.B.I. and the man was arrested.”

While in King’s presence, Jackson exhorted him to extend his movement northward to Chicago, a departure that was already being deliberated by the S.C.L.C., and he suggested that he himself could be of considerable assistance there—a prospect that could also, not incidentally, create a singularly promising theatre for a début of his own.

It took Jackson only two days in Selma to transact all this. Shortly after his session with King, he left to drive back to Chicago, bleary with a low-fever flu. Late at night in Birmingham, he paused to place a call from the phone booth of a gas station to his student quarters in Chicago, and learned that Jackie had given birth, in Greenville, to their second child, a son they named Jesse, Jr.

Back in Chicago, Jackson threw himself into cultivating the city’s black ministers, urging them to make a commitment to an effort there by King. He first found a church to attach himself to: while driving one Sunday, he heard on his car radio a broadcast of the morning services from Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church. Only a few moments after the broadcast’s conclusion, according to Bob Faw and Nancy Skelton’s book “Thunder in America,” he appeared in the office of the pastor, Clay Evans, and announced that he had driven straight there to offer whatever strengths he owned to help a church with so significant a radio ministry, explaining all this to Evans while sprawled on a couch with his feet propped on the corner of Evans’ desk. “Taking over my office like that,” Evans marvelled years later. “A person doesn’t usually act that way when they first come into your office.” For all his bravado, Jackson’s personal circumstances soon became evident when he began showing up, markedly more subdued, in the church’s weekly food line to collect free groceries for his family. But he quickly made himself the same sort of conspicuously vigorous presence in the church as he had when a teen-ager at Long Branch Baptist in Greenville. And before long Fellowship Baptist issued an invitation to King to speak from its pulpit.

But beyond Fellowship, Jackson says, “almost all the black establishment in Chicago, preachers and politicians, were incorporated into Daley’s system. Even Harold Washington”—who, eighteen years later, would be elected Chicago’s first black mayor—“he was part of the machine then.” At first, “ministers held a press conference, said Dr. King should not come to Chicago. It was this big church meeting, songs and all. Preachers, choir singin’ ‘Must Daley bear the Cross alone, and all the world go free?’ Actually happened, was on television.” So “the ministers were locked into Daley’s structure over here,” Jackson says, tossing out his left hand, “while the real needs of the community were way over here,” and he flings out his right hand. Interposing himself as an interlocutor with his now characteristic nimbleness, he began laboring to ease “as many ministers as possible into this gap here in the middle”—a position from which they would more readily respond to King’s call for a crusade against the degradations of Chicago’s slums. Jackson began by taking his pastor, Evans, to the single, fetid room inhabited by an invalid black mother subsisting on welfare, who was unable to stir from her wheelchair even to shoo away the rats mingling among her children on the floor. “He’d always thought he knew about poverty, but he left that room a shaken man.” Along with other black activists, particularly the S.C.L.C.’s James Bevel, Jackson gradually reconditioned sentiments in the black ministerial community for a mobilization by King in Chicago. At the same time, Jackson had also begun directing an expansion into Chicago of the S.C.L.C.’s Operation Breadbasket, an economic campaign that applied the compound suasions of boycott threats and negotiation offers to bring more blacks into major business concerns, from employee to executive levels. His substantial success in this second enterprise so impressed the S.C.L.C. office in Atlanta that the leaders there began planning to expand it into a national project.



All the while, he was scrimmaging on with his studies at the seminary. During his brief visit with King in Selma, he had noted, in King’s opened briefcase, two books of theological commentary, one by Reinhold Niebuhr and the other by Paul Tillich, and he remembers his wonder at the fact that “there in the middle of that big crisis and confrontation going on in Selma, he was still reading, still studying works like that.” As a student, King had set about systematically compiling an intellectual vision for himself before he was conscripted, largely by happenstance, into translating that vision into historical action. Jackson, however, seemed congenitally restive with any such initial phase of scholarly seasoning, with dwelling for very long in the life of the mind. Despite his claims of repeated hankerings to remove himself into calm academic sanctums, he was instinctively given to action over intellection—always impatient to rush directly into real events. That impulse for engagement over what he calls “the paralysis of analysis” has endured as the chief aspect of what some regard as Jackson’s essentially existential nature. He maintains, “Greatness is not in reading pages full of somebody else’s writing. It’s acting creatively in a cause that has not yet been fully tried. Knowing *about* has a place, but knowing as in ‘to act, to *be*,’ is deeper. Many things are much simpler than they’re made to seem, anyway. Lot of people make their living developing complications—the complication industry. But somebody once asked Duke Ellington, ‘How can you write so many different kinds of songs?’ and he said, ‘Well, I never went to college and learned I couldn’t.’ Way it often is with the great creators. Real leader, once he moves and sets the pace and sends the word out, people say, ‘Well, now. *That’s* what time of day it is.’ ”

Jackson’s professors at Chicago Theological Seminary later recalled him as dazzlingly quick to apprehend and assimilate the broad strokes and spirit of an idea but rather hectic, cursory, and unfocussed in his actual studies—as, for the most part, simply a resonantly imposing presence. "An electrifying chap" was how he was described to David Maraniss, of the Washington *Post*, a few years back. "A spectacular guy with spectacular gall," who had "this tremendous gift, this facile way with people and with words." In a course on Christian ethics, he elected to write no papers, declaring that he would "speak" his examinations, and he declined even to write out his sermon assignments, which brought him a D in his preaching course. He also missed so many classes that the faculty deliberated asking him to withdraw from the school. After listening to the reproaches of one professor, Jackson, leaning in the doorway of the professor's office, serenely apprised him, "You have to understand. I'm special."

Finally, on one of King's trips to Chicago to reconnoitre the field prepared by Jackson and others, King took him aside, according to Jackson, and proposed, "Come on with me. You come with me, you'll learn more theology in six months than you would in six years at the seminary." Though Jackson was already near-terminally restless about the relevance of his studies, it seemed a peculiar exhortation to come from King himself. Jackson now contends, improbably, that he was hesitant about King's invitation at first—"It was Jackie who finally persuaded me I ought to do it"—and likes to construct it as "the movement I was still trying to escape by moving to Chicago *came* to Chicago to claim me." In fact, it was mostly his own huge strivings that had brought it there. In any case, only some six months away from graduation he forsook the seminary to loose himself wholly into the civil-rights movement at last—at the side, as it had worked out, of its most fabled and auspicious figure.

OVER the short span of his two and a half years with King, there evolved what was probably the single most vital, tortured, fateful relationship of Jackson's life. Today, Jackson will sometimes insist, "King didn't just lean down, you know, and raise me up out of the mire and breathe life and motion into me, like everybody seems to assume. There's not been enough

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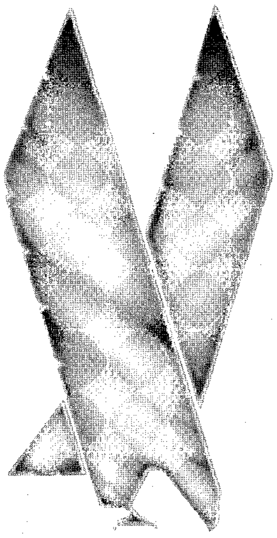

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attention to the anatomy of my own development. I was already very active on my own before I ever went with King." In that surprising and faintly churlish assertion, there would seem some defensive need still to validate his own place by abolishing the claim of anyone else, even King, to have been his author. To be sure, they were in fundamental ways different beings, not least in Jackson's uneasy condition as an outsider from the most bleakly marginal origins. He had hardly grown up, like King in Atlanta, as the favored son of a fiercely protective father in a comfortably middle-class family of the black community's gentry—all of which had left King, from his earliest childhood, with a sense of being at the privileged center of the world around him. In barren contrast, Jackson had had to make himself and his place almost completely on his own, out of nothing.

But it is unquestionable that, from the first, King was for Jackson something like his spirit's true, heroic father—a figure in whom he found a palpable realization of the dimension of his own grand dreams of what he wanted to become, to mean. He regarded King with an almost desperate adoration and awe. Some of King's aides—dubious about Jackson from his first blustery intrusion into their midst—would later recount, according to David J. Garrow's biography of King, "Bearing the Cross," how Jackson would "hang around . . . currying favor" with King; that even though he had arrived now on the staff of the S.C.L.C., he continued to be "really an outsider in a way, striving very hard to get in, to be accepted, to be respected."

Perhaps most of all, King enthralled Jackson by providing a defining vision of that higher power, and higher purpose, through which he could achieve his fullest promise. At that time, after Montgomery and Birmingham and Selma and his epic sermon at the Washington march, King was already coming to be regarded as an American Gandhi. For all his monumentally staid, black-suited comportment, his real power for moving multitudes came largely from his years of growing up in the oratorical raptures of black church services like those of Jackson's own boyhood in Greenville. The genius of King's often lumbering and fustian metaphors—"For too long have we been trampled under the iron feet of oppression, *too long* bound in the starless midnight of racism"—was that they were the rhetoric of the human spirit rousing itself for slow and momentous struggle. From all those Sundays of soul-shuddering preaching in his father's church, King had come by an almost physical sense of the protean energy and life of language, in which, as one associate observed, in a biography of King by Stephen B. Oates, "the right word, emotionally and intellectually charged, could reach the whole person and change the relationships of men."

But it was directly from King's radical, moral gospel metaphysic that Jackson derived what would endure as his own lifetime's vision. King proceeded from the essentially religious persuasion that in each human being, black or white, whether deputy sheriff or manual laborer or governor, there exists, however tenuously, a certain natural identification with every other human being—that, in the overarching moral design of the universe which ultimately connects us all together, we tend to feel that what happens to our fellow human beings in some way also happens to us, so that no man can continue to debase or abuse another human being without eventually feeling in himself at least some dull answering hurt and stir of shame. Therefore, in the catharsis of a live confrontation with wrong, when an oppressor's violence is met with a forgiving love, he can be vitally touched, and even, at least momentarily, reborn as a human being, while the society witnessing such a confrontation will be quickened in conscience toward compassion and justice. It may have been a rather ethereal proposition, and one that, some later suggested, assumed a bit too much for the species, but, for a time in the South, it had worked spectacularly. To that elementally Christian perspective, King had adapted Gandhi's concept of the "truth force" exerted by the massive, patient, nonviolent resistance of a subjugated people, which can purge a society of its more overt brutalities by presenting impossible inconveniences not only to its agencies of authority but to the conscience of its rulers. Thus the universal moral verities evoked by the civil-rights struggle could, beyond delivering blacks finally into full citizen-

"Catherine's gift to us tonight is her poetry."

• •

ship, also "redeem the soul of America—even save the whole of mankind," King propounded. "It may be that through the American Negro the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the whole."

That was very much King's ambition, in fact, when he undertook to project his movement beyond the South to Chicago: through the same strategy of nonviolent confrontation that had begun to remake the South he hoped to begin to recreate America itself. Jackson happened to join King at the moment when he was escalating his mission into that of a prophet to the conscience of the whole national community. But his Chicago offensive turned out to be, at best, inconclusive. In his campaign there "to bring about the unconditional surrender of forces dedicated to the creation and maintenance of slums," he encountered a field of resistance far more nebulous than the simple antagonisms in the South—a spectrum of real-estate interests and zoning technicalities, not to mention the Florentine wiles of Mayor Daley, who proved entirely too canny to place himself in any open collision with King, countering instead with his own proclamations of anti-poverty measures, and with craftily applied grants and subsidies throughout the black community. King's campaign became like trying to engage a malign smog. When everything finally ended in the ceremonious contrivance of a "summit agreement," which, aside from its amorphousness of terms, happened to carry no timetable, King confessed to several journalists that Chicago had confirmed for him the endemic, infinitely resourceful intractability of racism in the American system.

Confounded in Chicago, King seemed increasingly oppressed by a sense that he was in a contest between the progressive deadening of America's heart and the last hope for a "moral reconstruction" of its society into a true, common, national neighborhood. Flash combustions of despair and rage in Watts, Newark, Harlem, and Detroit, and the emergence of a blankly furious nihilism among new, young black Robespierres, had begun to bode a widening withdrawal of faith in King's testament of redemptive nonviolent resistance. At the same time, his outcry against Vietnam—in a period of general popular acceptance of the war—had disconcerted many of his own supporters. The result was that, on all sides, King found himself more and more isolated. Nevertheless, he proposed, in the summer of 1967, the most expansive and radical venture yet of his career: a continental mass movement called the Poor People's Campaign, which would gather into one monolithic front not only blacks but all the nation's dispossessed and discarded—Appalachian whites, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, Hispanics—a panoramic populist prospect that Jackson, some fifteen years later, would directly seek to repeat with his Rainbow Coalition. What King had in mind was nothing less than the reordering of the economic and power arrangements of the nation, the values and terms on which America worked. In thus following his moral vision to its ultimate implications, he had become perhaps the most subversive man in the country. Considerably more people of consequence than J. Edgar Hoover viewed him now with a measure of alarm. Finding himself suddenly enjoying much less company than during his civil-rights campaigns in the South, King was passing into that far region of all true prophets—the lonely terrain beyond the conventionally enlightened.

Even some on King's staff—including Jackson—initially resisted the Poor People's Campaign, as too sweeping and strategically uncertain a commitment. Jackson, according to his and others' recollections, argued, "Suppose Lyndon Johnson turns his back on us? What then? Are we just abandoned? How are we supposed to counter a rejection from the White House and Congress? What's the hook? If we don't get some results, we'll lose face." Actually, the Poor People's Campaign may have been a hopelessly misbegotten enterprise, for the same reasons that King's Chicago expedition miscarried: again, but on a national scale now, he was addressing a myriad of interests far more bafflingly abstract than the brute simplicity of Birmingham's Bull Connor or Al Lingo's troopers on the Selma bridge—a muzzy profusion of federal bureaucracies, company executive committees, glib and pleasant policy apologists, among which, in the words of a gospel song, "You can't find the one to blame/It's too smart to have a name/It's not flesh

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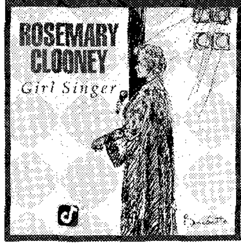

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and blood we fight with/ It's powers and principalities."

Yet, strangely, almost in inverse measure to his distress as he watched the preparations for his "last, greatest dream" beginning to falter, King's urgency seemed to grow more intense, ranging beyond the nation to embrace the world itself. America's disorder, he declared, was "inseparable from an international emergency which involves the poor, the dispossessed, the exploited of the whole world." It was as if he had come to feel weighted with all the planet's grief, all the earth's cruelty and anguish. On Christmas Eve of 1967, only a few months before he was assassinated, he appealed, from his pulpit at Ebenezer Baptist Church, in Atlanta, for some ultimate movement to accomplish a wholly new global community, beyond class, tribe, race, nation—"a world unity in which all barriers of caste and color are abolished."

IT was King's apostolic social vision that was to become Jackson's own through succeeding years. And while Jackson was entranced with King as a projection of his own aspirations, King, for his part, seemed especially fascinated by the electric promise that Jackson carried. At twenty-six, Jackson was the same age as King when he had assumed leadership of the Montgomery bus boycott, in 1955. By Jackson's own report, King even once had him preach in his place at Ebenezer, although he was still unordained, "because Martin saw something in me." But before long King also acquired an uneasiness about Jackson's undisguisable ambition, his compulsive posturing. It was as if King, knowing what was quite likely ahead for his gifted and eager young protégé, detected in Jackson an alarming susceptibility to the blandishments of celebrity—beguilements not unfamiliar to King himself. At the least, King had reason to feel misgivings about the capacity of a temperament like Jackson's for resisting the siren singings of pride and glory. "I can still remember," one of King's associates says, "how Jesse could never pass a reflective surface without pausing. Whether it was a piece of glass or a store window or just a shiny car, he'd have to stop a second and check himself out again."

For many of King's aides, Jackson provoked close to an allergic reaction. Part of their antipathy was that from operating on the streets of Chicago he brought, into the relatively measured and deaconlike decorum of the S.C.L.C., a style that was more like the rowdy flash of the fire-breathing young partisans of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. It made him, as one S.C.L.C. worker remarked at the time, "sort of a misfit, an off-brand, yeah." But a greater affront was what seemed the uncontainable audacity of his ego. He was still given to improvising sudden plays of his own; in the midst of King's campaign in Chicago, he appalled S.C.L.C. staff people by abruptly announcing imminent marches into the city's white suburbs after consulting only his own mood. As for the likelihood of wholesale mayhem that might follow, he merely observed, "We expect violence." With his wildcat pronouncement, he more or less impressed the S.C.L.C. into reluctantly mounting such marches. As it turned out, the unnerving prospect raised by his ad-lib maneuver flushed forth one of the few offers of direct negotiations from Daley's regime. It wasn't long, however, before King's staff began to suspect that Jackson was pursuing a secondary script of his own, through a symbiosis with King and the S.C.L.C. With Operation Breadbasket flourishing under his direction in Chicago, Jackson strenuously evaded all attempts by the S.C.L.C. and King to shift him into the Atlanta office, a move that would have detached him from the small, personal sub-franchise of leadership he had begun building in his new home city. "Staying in Chicago was a way of remaining almost independent while at the same time enjoying the benefits of SCLC connections," Ralph Abernathy reflected in his memoir, "And the Walls Came Tumbling Down." King himself began fretting to aides, "Jesse Jackson's just so independent. He's so ambitious."

The awkwardness that developed between King and Jackson was not unlike that which exists between a father who has, through great strain and daring and endurance, managed to achieve prodigious things and a richly but still rawly gifted son who has a blindly lunging haste to fulfill himself in the same way. There finally came an outburst of exasperation from King, which has since been widely recounted, after an S.C.L.C. meeting in which Jackson kept proposing alterations of the Poor People's Campaign, with King fuming out of the room and Jackson trailing after him, calling, "Doc? Doc?," at which King wheeled on him: "Jesse, if you're so interested in doing your own thing that you can't do what this organization's structured to do, go ahead. If you want to carve out your own niche in society, go ahead. But, for God's sake, don't bother me!" Jackson was left in such obvious despair that, a short while later, King quietly instructed Abernathy, "Please take care of Jesse." But, as Abernathy relates, Jackson's avid self-assertiveness persevered up to the eve of King's assassination, in Memphis, where King, diverted from mobilizing the Poor People's Campaign, had gone to lead a strike by sanitation workers. When King at first elected not to appear at that evening's mass meeting, Abernathy suggested, "Why don't you let Jesse go? He loves to speak"; at King's tart reply, "Nobody else can speak for me," Abernathy asked if he could at least take Jackson along, and King said, "Yes, but you do the speaking." Arriving with Jackson at the Mason Temple, Abernathy found so enormous an expectant throng that he began looking for a phone to summon King. At this, he says, Jackson quickly offered, "Don't call him. If you don't want to speak, then I'll speak." Abernathy phoned King nonetheless, and when he returned to the podium Jackson inquired, "Is Doc coming?" At Abernathy's word that he was, Jackson's face glazed over with dejection.

Late the next afternoon, however—as various accounts, including Gerold Frank's authoritative "An American Death," tell it—when King stepped out on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in his shirtsleeves, preparing to go to a Southern soul-cooked dinner at a local preacher's home before a mass meeting that evening, he seemed, as he chatted with several aides clustered in the courtyard below him, suddenly and pointedly solicitous of Jackson. "Tell Jesse to get ready," he boomed down. "He's going to dinner with us." An instant later, as if conjured forth by that mention, Jackson came battering down the metal stairway to take his place with the others in the courtyard. He was outfitted a touch rakishly, in a tan turtleneck sweater and a polished brown leather jacket, and when someone asked why he had not put on a tie he jubilantly rejoined that he had always believed that all one needed to take to a dinner was a good appetite. King, who had gone back into his room to get his jacket, reappeared on the balcony, and Jackson cried out, "Our leader!" King now called down directly to him, "Jesse, I want you to come to dinner with me." Standing near King on the balcony was the minister who had invited King's party to eat at his home, the Reverend Samuel (Billy) Kyles, and Kyles informed King, "Jesse took care of himself long before you did. He already got himself invited." King chuckled. Jackson then happily called up to King to introduce a member of his Operation Breadbasket band from Chicago, a saxophonist and soloist named Ben Branch, whom he had brought down to perform at that evening's meeting. King—whose joviality now in this reconciliation with Jackson was evident to everyone watching—replied, "Oh, yeah, he's my man." He leaned forward with both hands braced on the balcony railing. "Ben, I want you to play 'Precious Lord' for

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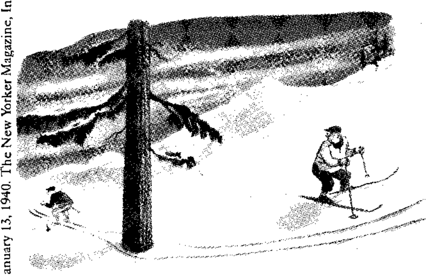

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me tonight, like you never played it before. Want you to play it *real* pretty.” King’s driver, Solomon Jones, then advised him that the evening seemed to be turning cool and that he should get his topcoat, and King, saying, “O.K., Jonesy,” was straightening up to turn back into his room when the shot rang out over the courtyard.

IN the bedlam that followed that rifle clap—which left masses of black Americans in a rage of despair, and set off firestorms in cities across the nation, including Washington—Jackson’s first reactions have ever since been a matter of bitter dispute. What is certain is that, amid the dazed milling about of King’s other aides that evening, he fled back to Chicago; the next morning, he appeared on “Today” and then, later, before a special convocation of Chicago’s city council—he was still wearing the tan turtleneck sweater from the night before, only now it was blotted with blood that he declared was King’s. “I come here with a heavy heart,” he said. “Because on my chest is the stain of blood from Dr. King’s head. He went through, literally, a crucifixion. I was there. And I’ll be there for the resurrection.” He indicated, in these appearances, that he was the last person King had spoken to, that he had actually held King as he was dying.

If the rest of King’s troupe of assistants had never been particularly enchanted with Jackson to start with, most of those who had been at the Lorraine Motel that evening were apoplectic when they learned of his claim. Several insisted that Jackson had never come near King’s body. One later reported that he had instead scurried off to take shelter near the motel’s swimming pool. Another claimed he had remarked afterward, “I’m sick. I got to go to Chicago and check into the hospital. This thing’s really shot my nerves.” Hosea Williams, an S.C.L.C. field organizer, maintained that, after Jackson had exhorted everyone not to talk to the journalists who were swiftly collecting at the scene, he found Jackson discoursing to several reporters off behind a chain-link fence, already explaining how he was the last person King had talked to; Williams had climbed halfway up the fence in an effort to get at Jackson, before someone pulled him back down. Undisputed is the fact that it was Jackson who first succeeded in getting through by phone to King’s wife, Coretta, though he delicately indicated to her that King had only been hit in the shoulder. Later that night, a solitary reporter waiting outside the hospital morgue where King’s body lay saw Jackson go in with Abernathy and two other King associates, Andrew Young and Bernard Lee, for a last, brief visit.

As King’s lieutenants scattered over the years into their separate and widely diverse destinies, their recollected impressions of Jackson’s performance after that moment in Memphis continued to rankle, particularly with the rise of Jackson’s own star. Especially bitter was James Bevel, perhaps the most feverishly intense of King’s young adjutants, who was also working in Chicago and had, in fact, been Jackson’s closest associate in the S.C.L.C. To “prostitute a race for one’s own self-aggrandizement,” to “lie about the crucifixion of a prophet within a race,” was, as he later put it to Gail Sheehy, “the most gruesome crime a man can commit.” For Jackson himself, the episode has repeatedly reared up like an unquiet spectre to harry him, in the recurrent questioning of journalists and the derision of adversaries, and for many years he attributed such dark imputations to misconstructions of what he had said at the time, to old resentments among the S.C.L.C. staff, to the malevolence of his antagonists. Today, he simply declines to address the issue anymore. In one late-night phone conversation not long ago, however, he muttered, “Look, I was up there. I was pointing.” He was obviously referring to the now familiar photograph of several of King’s assistants ranked on the balcony over King’s fallen form and pointing together in the direction of the shot, among whom no one has ever identified Jackson. It may be that not even he remembers precisely what happened in the wildness of those minutes.

But, according to one witness—Reverend Kyles, who was to be King’s host for dinner that evening, and was with him on the balcony, just turning to walk toward the stairs, at the slam of the rifle shot—“of course [Jesse] got blood on him” in the tumult that followed. He later told Garry Wills, “We all did. There was blood everywhere.” King had been jolted backward to his left, and lay slumped across the balcony floor with his shoes awkwardly crammed against the railing slats and his knees slightly lifted, his left arm outflung where it had fallen from its instinctive grope for the railing as he toppled. Kyles and Abernathy—he had been in the room splashing on after-shave lotion—were the first to reach King. A moment later, the balcony was swarming with other people: a Justice Department official, who'd accompanied King to Memphis, clumsily swaddling King's head in a towel; a deputy sheriff from somewhere; a documentary filmmaker; a reporter for the New York *Times*; and King's aides—including, Kyles insists, Jackson. Kyles ripped an orange bedspread from one of the twin beds in the room and brought it out to cover King. "Several of us handled him," Kyles has since attested, and among that number, he says, was Jackson.

As Garry Wills notes, in what is probably the most thoughtful appraisal of the whole affair, even if Jackson did return to the balcony after King's body was removed and swab blood onto his sweater, it has immemorially been a deep human urge in such instants of violent martyrdom to dip one's hands into, to preserve on oneself some touch of, the blood of a slain prophet or hero. While Jackson's story has come to be extensively dismissed as the contrivance of, in the words of one skeptic, "a compulsive con artist," or, more charitably, a compulsively self-dramatizing visionary with a chronic inclination toward hyperbole, the symbolism of his claim—a transfer of the commission, signified by a kind of anointing with King's very blood—has arguably turned out to be the reality. To a considerable degree, in his national activation of the black voting rights won by King in Selma, in his perpetuation of King's vision in the national life, in his ascent to become an almost totemic folk figure for America's black community, Jackson has proved to be probably King's single notable legatee. In Chicago that day, though he was still unmistakably stunned from the scene the night before in Memphis, he proceeded to speculate off and on to a local publicist accompanying him on a round of other TV shows about the possibility now that he might actually come to assume King's place. —MARSHALL FRADY

(*This is the second part of a three-part article.*)

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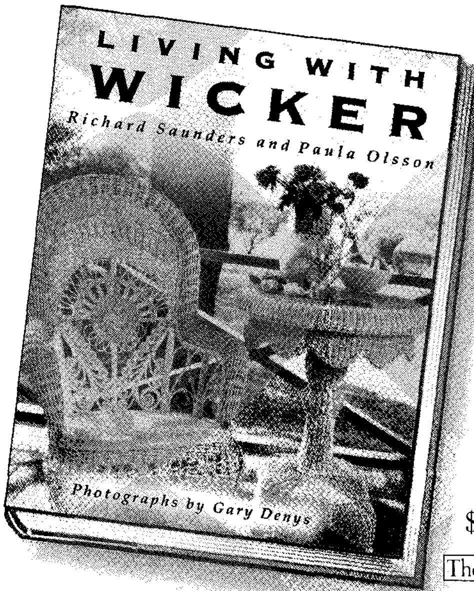

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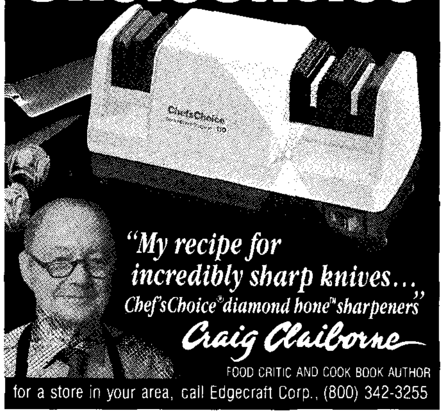

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THE THEATRE

Stopover

THE revival of Athol Fugard's "Boesman & Lena," at the Manhattan Theatre Club, as directed by Mr. Fugard himself, is by far the most openly emotional of the three productions I've seen. This time, Keith David and Lynne Thigpen are the couple—the Cape Coloureds—who trudge the mud flats of the Swartkops River, in South Africa, escaping time after time from the white man's bulldozer, which destroys their shanties. When they enter, Miss Thigpen's face is filthy, her clothes are slovenly and ragged, and her bare feet are covered with mud. There are bruises on her face and arms from recent beatings. Boesman and Lena are carrying all their possessions on their backs, and silently, sullenly, they set up camp. Their work in this place is digging worms for fishermen. What is acted out on the stage is one evening and night of their life—an evening and night in which they come to realize that they are not human rubbish but a man and a woman of some identity. Lena has found and, over Boesman's protests, insists on sheltering at their fire (which she has built in a large metal container) a feeble old black man, a Bantu speaker, who is in very bad shape. The old man eventually dies, and, the rules of apartheid being what they were, Boesman and Lena are in such danger that they must now move on with all possible speed, one step ahead of the police. This time, however, both of them realize as they load up that something has changed forever: they have connected in a way that they never have before. They know who they are and what binds them together.

Miss Thigpen and Mr. David and their play are spellbinding for all its hundred and five unbroken minutes. For me, the performance was haunted—pleasantly so—by Ruby Dee, of the original New York production; by Frances Foster, of the first revival I saw; by James Earl Jones; and, above all, by the late Robert Christian, who was profound and indelible. Mr. David, much of the time silently on the boil, and Miss Thigpen, her hurt and defiance almost spilling over, are worthy of their predecessors, and so is Tsepo Mokone, as the black African. The dramatic setting—a backdrop strip of hot oranges and yellows—and the costumes were designed by Susan Hilferty, who was also the associate director. Lighting by Dennis Parichy.

—EDITH OLIVER

Vacancies

"A LITTLE HOTEL ON THE SIDE," the second offering from Tony Randall's National Actors Theatre, is considerably less dreadful than that company's recent production of "The Crucible." The Feydeau farce, which Mr. Randall is starring in, is not so entertaining or so well presented that you would actually send anyone to see it, but neither would you feel sorry for anyone who blundered into the Belasco, where it's running. Of course, "The Crucible" is not a very good play, and the production raised questions about Mr. Randall's judgment without making you long to see Arthur Miller better served. "Hotel Paradiso" (the original title), which Feydeau wrote with Maurice Desvallierès, is a kind of masterpiece, and enough of its brilliance shines through—particularly in John Mortimer's highly literate translation—to make one long for a company of greater honesty and subtlety, and for a director wise enough to leave the play's moral mechanics intact. A good production of Feydeau ought to remind us how much more he has in common with Oscar Wilde and Joe Orton than with Noël Coward. Unfortunately, the current revival, directed by Tom Moore, seems to have been conceived less as a showcase for the playwright than as a vehicle for Mr. Randall himself.

Here he plays Benoit Pinglet, a building contractor whose roving eye and monster wife cause him to seek an assignation with his next-door neighbor's neglected wife (Maryann Plunkett). Wandering in and out of Pinglet's study are the would-be adulteress's husband (played by an understudy, Bruce Katzman, on the night I attended); a concupiscent housemaid (Madeleine Potter) and a monkish philosophy student (Rob Lowe), whom the former hopes to direct toward more worldly pursuits; and a naïve, stammering widower (Paxton Whitehead) with four young daughters (Siobhan Tull, Kia Graves, Danielle Ferland, and Nell Balaban). Circumstances conspire to land everyone, with the exception of Pinglet's wife (Lynn Redgrave), at the hotel of the title, where in the course of a single evening a good time is had by none—including, in the current instance, the audience.

The mistake Mr. Moore has made is not trusting either the text or the audience, and assuming that you have to soup things up with a lot of shtick and slapstick. Like David Jenkins' tongue-in-cheek sets and Patricia Zipprodt's unattractive costumes, which seem to be expressing their contempt for the play, everything about the production resembles a cartoon—particularly the performances. If Miss Plunkett (who manages here to look intermittently like Piper Laurie and Shirley Knight and to sound,

A Fork in the Road

by turns, like Judy Holliday, Shelley Winters, and Glynis Johns) and Mr. Whitehead (he's Robert Morley without the paunch) give the only genuinely funny performances, that's because they're the only members of the cast who are playing for real: the others are hamming or clowning, trying to evoke some type, or striving for a notion of "style." The relentlessly perky Miss Potter is playing her idea of the French Maid. Mr. Lowe—his normally high voice even higher than usual—is playing his idea of the Sap. (This must be how he views sexual innocence.) Miss Redgrave, hideously got up to look like a sort of balding giantess, is playing the Ogress. Still worse are Patrick Tull, who plays the hotel manager like Macbeth's porter on LSD; Zane Lasky, in the tiny role of a French schoolmaster; Brian Reddy, who comes on to do a brief Jonathan Winters impression; and an amateurish little fellow named Alec Mapa, who does so much mugging as the hotel bellboy as to make the second act an intermittent torment.

Mr. Randall is actually in his element in the midst of all this. Turning Feydeau's protagonist into a laugh-track role, he plays shamelessly to the audience—leaping and lurching about the stage, doing takes and bits, pulling faces, milking every double-entendre to within an inch of its life, and delivering each booming insult out to the house. The audience eats it up. But they're not having that much fun—partly because it's boring to be chased.

There's something wrong with a repertory company that shows its principals a better time than it shows its subscribers. Still, in Miss Plunkett—a woman with irreproachable timing, who can clearly play either pathos or comedy—Mr. Randall has at least one fine repertory actress. And it's always a treat to see Paxton Whitehead. And if you can pull your mind back a bit from this production—the way you stand back and squint at a painting—it's possible to imagine the way a good production of Feydeau would work; it would be a play not about commedia-dell'arte figures but about real people, members of the Parisian *haute bourgeoisie*, caught up in the whirlwind nightmare of a playwright's demented vision and, as a result, getting exactly what they deserve.

—MIMI KRAMER

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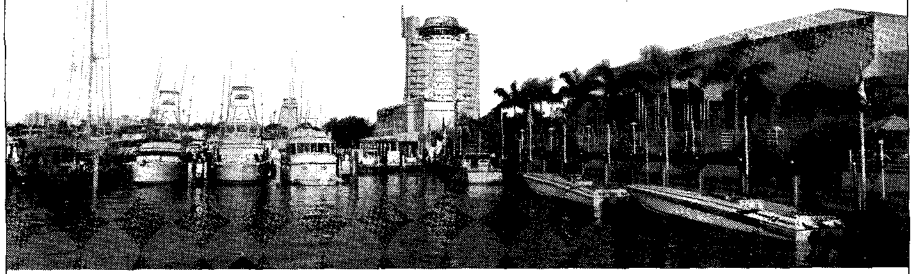

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Pleasures and Penances

THE 92nd Street Y Schubertiade began, in 1988, with the ambitious plan of performing, in roughly chronological order and across a span of ten years, all Schubert's compositions—from D. 1, a piano-duet Fantasy of 1810, to D. 965, "The Shepherd on the Rock," which was written shortly before his death, in 1828. For three years, the Schubertiade prospered. In 1990, it reached D. 380 or so (though it had fallen far behind schedule in the operas). But last year there was a lull, no Schubertiade, and this year the celebration has returned in a different and diminished form. The 1992 bill offered just three concerts: Hermann Prey singing a recital of sixteen Goethe settings (eight of which had figured in earlier Schubertiades); Mr. Prey singing four well-known songs, paired with the instrumental works using their melodies; and Mr. Prey singing five well-known songs, each followed by Liszt's piano transcription. (That program also included Schubert dances, followed by Liszt's Schubert-based "Soirées de Vienne.") In addition, Mr. Prey gave a master class on Schubert's Goethe settings; and in a final symposium, entitled "Schubert the Man—Myth Versus Reality," Mr. Prey was billed to take part in a performance of excerpts from Heinrich Berté's Schubert-derived operetta, "Dreimäderlhaus." Another topic down for discussion at the symposium was Schubert's homosexuality. This is now being treated as "news"; it has long been apparent just below the surface of Schubert's letters and diaries and the memoirs by his friends, which have been in print for decades.

The first years of the Schubertiade gave delight and brought discoveries, threw light on the young creator as he tackled symphonies, songs, string quartets. The long ballads and the strange Ossian settings were revelations. But there were also doubts whether it made artistic sense to plow through the whole catalogue, number by number. Sets of eight and nine solo-violin ländler, all in the same key, might be fun at a tavern ball, but in the concert hall they tried patience. Produce only the works worth hearing, one wanted to say; winnow; bring to performance, alongside the cherished masterpieces, the unfamiliar works that display Schubert's genius. Instead, we have been offered a festival of, mainly, the familiar, albeit in thematic programs. Moreover, it is in effect a one-man celebrity show—the Hermann Prey Schubertiade.

Mr. Prey, who is sixty-two, has a loyal New York following, and he draws full houses to the Y. With enthusiasm his admirers applauded the opening program. He made his début forty years ago, and his New York début in 1960, as Wolfram in the Met "Tannhäuser." I admired him in that role at Bayreuth, for his full, forthright utterance, for bright, brilliant, rounded sounds. I admired him in recordings of operas by Carl Orff. But—blunt, extrovert, eagerly communicating excited yet obvious emotions—he has never been a lieder singer of subtlety or special merit. His sense of rhythm is weak, and he does not draw a long line through extended songs; they fall apart, into a series of phrases. Today—when he shouts the loud moments and must strive to sustain the pitch of soft passages—he seems to me a performer sometimes more embarrassing than rewarding. He can still pull out some ringing D's and E-flats. Leonard Hokanson was his accompanist.

Meanwhile, Hyperion's alternative Schubertiade—the complete songs presented in a series of CD recitals, each by a different singer—has reached Volume 12; the tenor Adrian Thompson and the pianist Graham Johnson (who also directs the enterprise and writes the lively booklet essays) join in twenty-one of Schubert's earliest songs. The latest issue of *The Record Collector*—a quarterly written and read by connoisseurs of vocal art—is devoted to Gerhard Hüsch, the great Schubert singer of the prewar years. Hüsch was fifty-four when I heard him sing "Winterreise," still memorably. Back in 1933, when he was thirty-two, he made the recording of the cycle which (I quote Desmond Shawe-Taylor) "has never been surpassed in beauty of tone, clarity of utterance, and unforced nobility of style." A few years ago, it was reissued, along with "Die Schöne Müllerin" and other Schubert songs, on Arabesque. Anyone who failed to snap up the album at the time can in the *Record Collector*

"To the woman who discovered fire!"

discography find other ways of pursuing those performances in reissue. (The magazine costs thirty dollars a year, from 111 Longshots Close, Broomfield, Chelmsford CM1 5DU, England.) I came back from this year's first Schubertiade concert wondering, not for the first time, what a modern audience thinks it has been hearing and, for consolation, spent an hour with Schubert and Gerhard Hüsch.

FOCUS!, the Juilliard School's annual celebration of twentieth-century music, has sometimes thrown its focus rather far back into history: in 1989, "The Sixties Revisited"; in 1990, "The World of Arnold Schoenberg"; last year, "Looking Back: A Festival of Neoclassicisms." But this year the subject was "The American Eighties." There were six concerts. Admission was free. The works of thirty-six composers—eight of them foreign-born—were played. No single theme was illustrated; Joel Sachs, the festival director, set out to demonstrate diversity, not "trends." There was a program saluting John Cage in his eightieth year. (It included his "Sonnekus^2" and "Two^2," along with other tosh.) There was a clutch of compositions making use of electronics; there were three string quartets in contrasted styles. Elliott Carter and Milton Babbitt were represented by short pieces only—the duo "Enchanted Preludes" and the snare-drum solo "Homily"—in order to leave room, Mr. Sachs wrote, for less familiar names.

The concluding concert was assigned to the Juilliard Symphony; for the rest, students had volunteered to perform music that, the program told us, "takes them beyond their daily routines." The performance level was high. At the opening concert, in Alice Tully Hall, there were three exceptional soloists, who matched technical accomplishment and interpretative ardor: Maria Kitsopoulos gave a rapt performance of Leon Kirchner's "For Cello Solo" (1988), an emotional eight-minute discourse; Jay Kauffman held one intent on the rhythmic play and fascinating inventions of Roberto Sierra's guitar solo "Toccata y Lamento" (1987); David Gresham gave a virtuoso account of Joan Tower's grand clarinet solo—long sustained, but not a moment too long—"Wings" (1981). In the "Enchanted Preludes" (1988) Emma Moon, flute, and Johan Stern, cello, were fluent, but too narrow in dynamic range. Abby Furmansky missed some of the glow and passion in John Harbison's "Mirabai Songs" (1982); she did not have them by heart.

The second concert, in the Juilliard Theatre, which was gloomily underlit, was less well attended; the Super Bowl provided a rival attraction. The program began with Chinary Ung's "Spiral" (1987), that harmless but protracted stretch of pretty Orientalisms recast for Western instruments: wailing or whistling cello, piano with simple pentatonic melodies or on-the-strings patter, daintily tinkling percussion. The cellist, Laura Koehl, was masterly. The string quartets followed. When the Concord Quartet brought Jacob Druckman's Third Quartet (1981) to New York, Nicholas Kenyon in these pages called it "a winner," lucid and well imagined in sound, engaging and resourceful in structure. "This is not a work of deep substance or of deep emotional effect, but it is very pleasing"; and pleasing it was, again. Robert Erickson's "Solstice" (1984-85), a program note warned us, demands "great placidity from the listener." It is easygoing music. More than once, one thought, hopefully, that it was over—but it started up again. The cellist, Daire Fitzgerald, and the violist, Caroline Coade, were striking players. There was more sustenance in Richard Wilson's Third Quartet (1982), a richly wrought and unusual composition: the movements are Prelude, Episode, and Elegy. (There is a recording on CRI, by the Muir Quartet.) The Juilliard is evidently having a vintage cello year; in the Wilson quartet, Eric Gaenslen's tone was noble.

At the third concert, the theatre, though overheated, was so dark that people had to slip out into the lighted lobby between items to read their programs and discover what was coming next. After the performances, the artists strove to share their applause with the composers, and in the darkness they rose—unrecognized, unnoticed except by those sitting near them. No sense of a community, of performers, composers, and listeners gathered together to enjoy the art of our age, was fostered. Contemporary music in this city is killed by making attendance on

"I can resist everything except temptation."
—Oscar Wilde

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it a penance. Where else in the world would a festival audience be offered nothing but water in the way of refreshment? The Juilliard cafeteria may not qualify in cuisine—as in London the Almeida wine bar does—for inclusion in the city's good-food guides, but it is an agreeable space into which to invite all the participants in a festival concert to mingle, drink, eat, and discuss what has been heard. Only one New York—near-New York—festival that I know has encouraged such communication: PepsiCo Summerfare, at Purchase, which is now no more. If I were the head of Lincoln Center, or very rich, I would invite Christopher Hunt, that visionary who ran Summerfare so fully, imaginatively, and exigently, to provide in New York new-music festivals with all the trimmings that lighten penance and enhance pleasure.

If I go on about trimmings, it is because this third concert was depressing. We came, we listened, and at the end we glumly went away. Of the seven pieces that were played, only the last was worth listening to—and that for only half its length. It was a long section—the last three movements—of Steve Reich's Sextet (1985), for four percussions and two electronic keyboards. The timbres were attractive, and so were the transformations within repetitiveness, but the schematism soon palled. The movements were played as a prelude and accompaniment to "Impact," a dance by Laura Dean revised and restaged by Anne Lord Wennerstrand; the bright patterns of the dancers—repetitive with variations—added clever counterpoints to the score. The musical performance, directed by Dean Thomas, was more punctilious than brisk.

The pianists Raymond Thornton, who made the most of his role in Ursula Mamlok's Rhapsody (1989), for clarinet, viola, and piano, and Clemens Leske, who played Tania León's clattery "Ritual" (1987) with brio, we will probably hear of again. But the choice of works suggested a fair-shares-for-all—the Dodo's "*Everybody* has won, and *all* must have prizes"—approach on Mr. Sachs's part: here a woman, here a black, here a young minimalist, here a Juilliard professor of composition, here someone who has been plugging away in the New York scene worthily, decently, for years. The American eighties produced more exciting works than these.

THE New York Virtuoso Singers, conducted by Harold Rosenbaum, and Parnassus, directed by Anthony Korf, joined forces last month for a Merkin Hall concert at which Korf's "Cantata" had its first performance and Jonathan Harvey's "Forms of Emptiness" its first American performance. Korf is a quirky, uneven composer; I missed whatever points he sought to make in his "Cantata"—a setting of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Cummings, and a schoolgirl's naïve, touching love letter. The Harvey work, which was written six years ago, is visionary and beautiful. A brief cantata (about fifteen minutes), it is a setting, for three choirs and a solo quartet, of three Cummings poems—"!hope / faith! / !life / love! / bells cry bells / (the sea of the sky is / ablaze with their / voices)," "silence / .is / a / looking / bird," and "how many moments must(amazing each / how many centuries)these more than eyes / restroll and stroll some never deepening beach"—and the Heart Sutra. The last is chanted, in Sanskrit, on a low A, accompanied by a low-A drone with harmonics emphasized by the droner or touched in by other soloists, and it is spoken in English translation by a soloist (or alternating soloists) who "should be in sympathy with the text and speak with joyful inner calm." Above the serene chant, there are flashes of present joy: the choirs, each four-part, sing the Cummings poems sometimes with Palestrinian euphony—but through a kaleidoscope of lapped keys—and sometimes with dense, vibrant harmonies. Harvey has a wonderful ear for textures and sonorities, and he is a poetic architect.

Mr. Rosenbaum's sixteen singers are virtuosi indeed, masters in a contemporary repertory that, but for them, we would seldom hear. (On a forthcoming CRI disk, they sing Henze's "Orpheus Behind the Wire," George Perle's "Sonnets to Orpheus," David Lang's "By Fire," Dallapiccola's Six Choruses of Michelangelo.) Schoenberg's Three Satires—"Who's drumming away there? Why, it's little Modernsky!"—were done rather earnestly, without the wit and malice that might make them seem less leadenly humorous. Ravel's Trois Chansons—Suzanne Peck a clear soloist in "Trois Beaux Oiseaux"—were poised and polished.

—ANDREW PORTER

THE CURRENT CINEMA

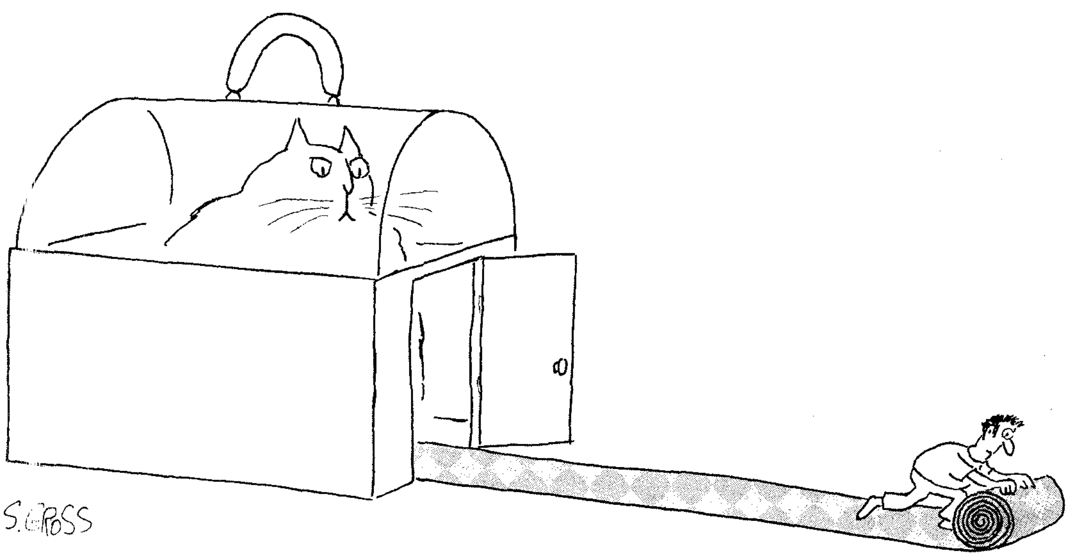
Unnatural Acts

DAVID CRONENBERG'S "Naked Lunch" isn't really an adaptation of William S. Burroughs' famous novel of that name. It is, rather, a brisk and well-organized tour of Burroughs Country: the nightmarish terrain of the writer's imagination, in which all the landmarks are distorted, disorienting, grotesque. The movie's primary setting is a place called Interzone, a kind of fever-dream rendering of Tangier, where Burroughs, in the fifties, wrote much of the material that was eventually assembled in the form of "Naked Lunch." The novel is essentially a collage of intense hallucinatory fragments, arranged in a willfully haphazard way; it's a book of visions, most of them violently paranoid fantasies related in the detached manner of a diarist. Burroughs' "Naked Lunch" is many things at once: a fierce anti-authoritarian satire; a shockingly funny description of the life and thoughts of a drug addict; an experiment in language and fictional structure; a scabrous free-form comedy routine. It's perhaps best understood as a report on the consciousness of someone whose brain has exploded; the prose is like a torch playing over pieces of the wreckage. Cronenberg doesn't try to re-create the novel's headlong rush of imagery, or to imitate the spurting energy of Burroughs' style. The movie is content to be an intelligent and affectionate homage to the novel; Cronenberg's screenplay is an attempt to imagine where this bizarre, unaccountable work of genius might have come from, to get inside the mind of a writer caught in the unnatural act of making literature.

The hero of Cronenberg's "Naked Lunch" is a gaunt, ghostly-looking man called William Lee (Peter Weller)—a name that turns up in several of Burroughs' books and always designates the writer's fictional alter ego. Lee works as an exterminator (as Burroughs once did) and lives, with his wife, Joan (Judy Davis), in a seedy New York apartment. It's 1953; the Lees' social circle consists of a couple of Beat-generation literary types named Martin (Michael Zelniker) and Hank (Nicholas Campbell), who are clearly modelled on Burroughs' close friends Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. First Joan and then Bill start shooting up the contents of the extermination company's cannisters; soon they're both hooked on bug powder. (This is, of course, an invention of Cronenberg's; Burroughs was, more mundanely, addicted to heroin.) The powder doesn't have a soothing effect on Bill: under its influence, a giant talking bug appears, tells him that his wife is the agent of a hostile power, and orders him to kill her. One day, he does. After doing some powder, Bill takes out a gun, Joan puts a glass on top of her head, and they demonstrate for Martin their "William Tell routine"; the bullet makes a neat hole in her forehead. (Burroughs did kill his wife, Joan Vollmer, and in exactly that way.) Horrified at what he has done, Lee goes on the lam mentally, transporting himself—by means of a syringeful of bug powder and another imaginary drug called black meat—to Interzone. He holes up in a room with a typewriter that sometimes turns into the articulate insect of his earlier powder visions. The bug, which speaks in the language of pulp-thriller intrigue, dictates "reports" to him; these messages, we're given to understand, are the beginnings of "Naked Lunch."

Interzone, where Lee bangs away at his typewriter like a man possessed (or programmed), is a treacherous place, full of dangerous characters with evil motives. In the junkie writer's weirded-out state of mind, no one can be trusted, and everything seems to conspire against him. He lives in a world of jealous writers, unscrupulous drug peddlers, sinister Arabs, depraved European aristocrats, and alien creatures known as Mugwumps. (The Mugwumps, who also occasionally mutate into typewriters, secrete a narcotic liquid of semenlike consistency from tubes that grow out of their heads—the very juice of creation, straight from the source.) As in a lurid spy novel, the air of Interzone is thick with betrayal and the hero moves warily through the labyrinthine streets: he feels as if he were being manipulated, but he can't tell by whom or to what purpose. At one point, he finds himself back in his New York apartment, where Martin and Hank are reading—awestruck—the jumble of pages he has brought back from Interzone; he can't remember writing any of them. His friends exhort him to "finish the book," and, courageously, he returns to Interzone and remains there to fulfill his destiny.

What all this amounts to is an ingeniously constructed myth of literary inspiration. Cronenberg picks up on the idea—a popular one among Burroughs critics and biographers—that the death of Joan Vollmer somehow provided the impetus for Burroughs' career as a writer. Cronenberg adds to this biographical hypothesis a skewed notion of artistic creation as divine transcription—the image of the artist as the helpless medium of an obscure higher power. The movie's William Lee allows himself, heroically, to become a vessel of literary



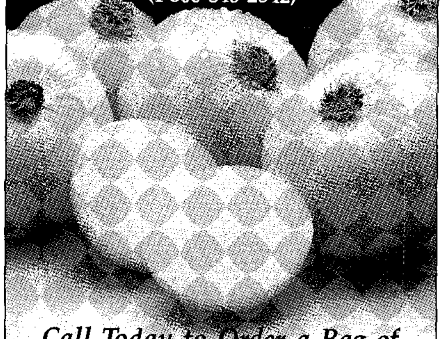
grace; in his trancelike condition, the junk of inspiration flows through him and onto the page. The neutral, ascetic, disembodied quality that Weller gives the character is perfectly suited to this conception; his Lee is a dazed automaton and a kind of mystic. The movie is often extremely funny, and it flirts with daring subjects, but it's based on a hokey, mystified, and entirely unsubversive idea of the writer's activity: Cronenberg accounts for the birth of Burroughs' "Naked Lunch" by turning its author into a strung-out St. John of the Cross.

The movie "Naked Lunch" is an amazingly tight, coherent piece of work. Everything in the script adds up; Cronenberg makes sense of Burroughs. Too much sense, actually. The picture's argument is tidy, hermetic. It has the quality of a brilliant performance by a university lecturer; Cronenberg's reading of Burroughs is so impeccably worked out that you begin to feel trapped—even while you're enjoying his clever discourse, with its superbly timed jokes, you're looking forward to escaping the classroom so you can start to think for yourself again. The striking images and peculiar sensibility of this movie are surprisingly easy to shrug off. Ultimately, Cronenberg's "Naked Lunch" is no more than a weird comedy about writing—a narrow, limited subject. It doesn't get into your system, change your perceptions, derange your sense of reality in any serious way. Cronenberg may like the idea of spontaneous, unwilled artistic creation, but he doesn't practice what he preaches. His "Naked Lunch" is a control freak's portrait of a wild man.

THERE'S a satisfying gravity and solidity to the British true-crime drama "Let Him Have It." The movie, directed by Peter Medak ("The Ruling Class," "The Krays") from a screenplay by Neal Purvis and Robert Wade, is set in the early fifties, and it tells the story of Derek Bentley, who, at the age of nineteen, was executed for the murder of a policeman in South London. Derek, an epileptic and mildly retarded young man from a respectable middle-class family, didn't kill the cop; his friend Chris Craig was convicted of firing the fatal shot, but the prosecutors and the judge at the boys' trial convinced the jury that Derek had egged him on. As the movie renders the events that led to the killing, Derek (played by Chris Eccleston) and Chris (Paul Reynolds) are preparing to rob a warehouse when they're surprised by the police—someone spotted the boys just before they shinnied up a drainpipe to the warehouse roof. The first cop on the scene grabs Derek and turns to confront Chris, who's waving a pistol; the policeman asks him to hand over the weapon, Derek shouts "Let him have it, Chris!," and Chris pulls the trigger. This policeman is only wounded, but the next cop to arrive on the roof is shot dead. Derek's ambiguous words—which may, of course, have meant "Give him the gun," and which, in any event, both boys denied his having uttered—are cited in court as evidence of his complicity in the murder. Despite the fact that nothing else in Derek's behavior on the rooftop indicated that he wanted his accomplice to shoot anyone, he's convicted and sentenced to death. Chris is only sixteen, and can't be executed; Derek has to pay the price for his friend's crime.

This is a horrifying tale of injustice. Even at the time, there was a good deal of public outrage about the sentence; the manifest unfairness of Derek Bentley's fate was a factor in England's abolition of capital punishment (which was legislated in 1965). The beauty of the movie's script is that it allows the terrible facts of the case to speak for themselves. The writers resist the temptation to hit us over the head with the perfidy of the British justice system. They keep our attention focussed on Derek and his anguished family; we see every stage of the action from the Bentleys' perspective, each cruel twist of fate in terms of its effect on them. Occasionally, this subjective approach seems to be depriving us of important procedural details. The trial goes by in a blur, and that's undoubtedly how the Bentleys experienced it; the whole proceeding was over in two days. But we feel as if we hadn't been given enough information to understand how everything can have gone so wrong. For the most part, though, the filmmakers' concentration on the family's emotional responses works astoundingly well. The movie never seems abstract or tendentious; it's always grounded in something real.

Medak's direction is sensitive and blessedly straightforward; he serves the very good script conscientiously and keeps his artier tendencies (which



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he indulged to the hilt in "The Krays") in check. He and his cinematographer, Oliver Stapleton, give a rich, complex texture to the Bentleys' everyday life. They do a fine job, too, of evoking the allure of sharp-dressing gangsters, like Chris's brother Niven (Mark McGann), in the blasted landscape of postwar London; they make it easy to understand why their sweet, naïve hero would be attracted to the flash style of the local hoods. And Medak has done remarkable work with the actors here. Chris Eccleston, a gangly young man with an open, expressive face, is a heartbreakingly convincing Derek. Eccleston never pushes the character's pathos; he moves us honestly. Paul Reynolds gives an effective hyperkinetic performance as the adolescent psycho Chris. And Clare Holman, who plays Derek's kindhearted sister, brings a lovely, quiet sense of emotional strength to her few scenes.

The deepest pleasure of "Let Him Have It," though, is the performance of Tom Courtenay as Derek's father. William Bentley is a soft-spoken, neatly groomed, and rather reserved man; he reads his paper, watches TV with the family, and gives his kids a talking-to when he thinks it's called for. His temperament is low-key and his manner is cautious. So when we see him trying to choke back his own distress and hold his family together after Derek's conviction, the effect on us is devastating; and when he throws himself into a campaign to win a reprieve for his son, we feel as if we knew exactly how much the effort is costing him emotionally—what depths of love he must be drawing on. Courtenay has become a miraculously pure and economical actor. There's a scene near the end in which William Bentley, on the morning of his son's execution, walks out onto the street in front of his house and takes his mail from the postman. Medak shoots the scene from a distance and from overhead, emphasizing the early-morning desolation of the neighborhood and the smallness of the two figures in the middle of the street. But the bone-tired dignity of the father's walk and the simple gesture with which he accepts the mail are so perfectly judged that we might be seeing the character in closeup: even in long shot, Courtenay is vivid and eloquent. He's the soul of "Let Him Have It." William Bentley wasn't able to save his son from the gallows, but

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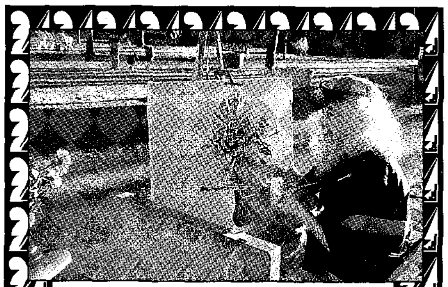

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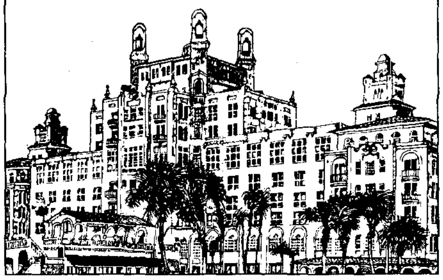

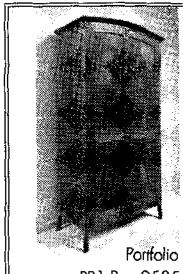

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thanks to Courtenay the movie does full justice to the story of Derek's short, unhappy life.

"HIGH HEELS," Pedro Almodóvar's new movie, is livelier than his sour, enervated 1990 film "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!," but there's no reason to get excited about it. Even at its best, the picture is just featherweight postmodern camp: a breezy and disposable exercise in style. The ferocious spirit of transgression that animated "Matador," "Law of Desire," and "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" seems to have disappeared from Almodóvar's work. He's satisfied now with providing chic entertainment for the fashion-conscious. "High Heels" is this season's collection—the latest in naughty notions and candy-colored visual conceits from the House of Almodóvar. The scenes file past us like outfits in a runway show, and how we respond to them is strictly a matter of connoisseurship: this one's fresh and witty; that one's not bad, but it's been done; *that* one's hopeless. After a while, these tiny discriminations start to feel pretty pointless. One thing is about as good as another, and nothing is quite good enough.

As usual, Almodóvar is trying to combine giddy farce with steamy, over-the-top melodrama. The heroine, Rebeca (Victoria Abril), is a television newscaster who was abandoned as a child by her ambitious mother, a flamboyant singer-actress named Becky del Páramo (Marisa Paredes). When the aging star returns to Madrid after an absence of fifteen years, sparks begin to fly: Rebeca's husband, Manuel (Feodor Atkine), is—unbeknownst to her—a former lover of her mother's, and he and Becky are still attracted to one another. When caddish Manuel is murdered, the women are, naturally, the prime suspects. In the movie's major comic set piece, Rebeca reports the crime on her evening newscast and then, with the cameras rolling, confesses. Her dramatic statement doesn't really resolve the mystery, though, because it isn't certain that she has told the truth: she might simply have been expressing her guilt for having desired her husband's death; she might have been covering up for her mother. The most important effect of Rebeca's confession is that it lands her in jail, and thus allows Almodóvar to stage parodic women-in-prison sequences, including an elaborate musical production number in the exercise yard. There's also a subplot involving a female impersonator called Femme Lethal (Miguel Bosé), who does a wicked Becky; he's been missing since the murder and everyone seems to think that he knows *something*. Becky herself, done up in the lavish regalia of an entertainment legend, belts out a couple of doomed-love ballads in the course of the picture. For the movie's climax, Almodóvar shifts into the mode of an unabashed tearjerker; he attempts to tie the whole silly package together with an apparently heartfelt scene of mother-daughter reconciliation. The grand emotions seem to come out of nowhere: Almodóvar asks us to be moved by Becky's nobility after he's spent the entire movie ridiculing her. The sentimental attitude he strikes at the end is arbitrary and inconsequential, like all the attitudes that have preceded it.

In "High Heels," Almodóvar's audacity—his willingness to violate the norms of dramatic construction, to mix radically different tones and styles, to make things up as he goes along—isn't as bracing as it used to be: it feels trivial. The movie is the expression of a personality rather than of a sensibility. There's no urgency in Almodóvar's perversity here, no challenge in his dissonant effects, no real tension in his wildly intricate plot. When he was in peak form, the farce and the melodrama in his pictures always seemed to be commenting on each other: in "High Heels" they merely alternate, distractedly. What makes the movie so unconvincing, even in its own defiantly superficial terms, is the lack of a unifying idea, of an overriding joke: the humor doesn't deepen as the story progresses, and when the picture is over we're still waiting for a punch line. The best moments in "High Heels" are throwaway gags, detachable bits of comic inspiration: a sequence of absurdly acrobatic sex in Femme Lethal's dressing room; a couple of brief, hilarious scenes featuring a police detective's hypochondriacal mother (Mairata Obisiedo). When this display of designer filmmaking is finished, you're left with an eerie sense of insubstantiality. You've been watching Almodóvar strut around in his new clothes for almost two hours, and five minutes later all you can remember are a handful of shiny accessories.

—TERRENCE RAFFERTY

ANNALS OF SCIENCE

SLEEP

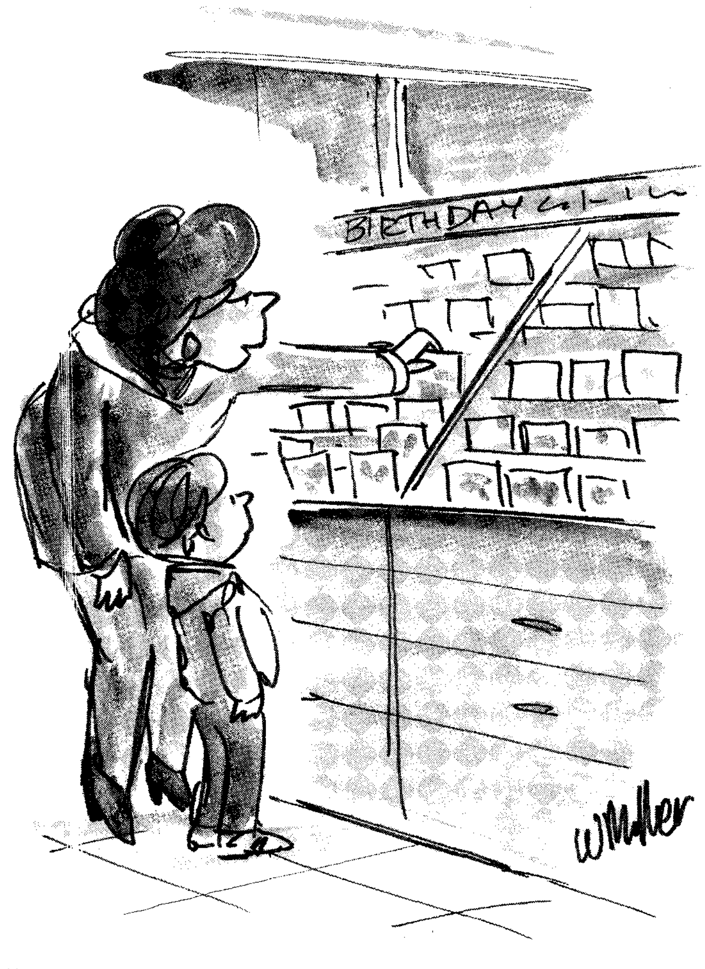
Some must watch while some must sleep,
Thus runs the world away. —"*Hamlet.*"

ATKINSON MORLEY'S HOSPITAL, in Wimbledon, a rambling, two-story building of gray-yellow brick, is a sister hospital of St. George's, Tooting, and it specializes in neurosurgical, neurological, and psychiatric cases. It also houses—under the aegis of St. George's chief psychiatrist, Professor A. H. Crisp—one of the National Health Service's last surviving sleep laboratories. Atkinson Morley's was built in the grand Victorian manner, and some of that grandeur lingers in the spacious wards. The offices and some areas for research, however, have been chopped out of larger rooms, so some of them are as high as they are wide. This makes the bedroom where the sleep laboratory's patients spend the night seem out of proportion: the window is unnaturally tall, the walls are unnaturally close, the ceiling is full of shadows. The room is furnished simply: a bed with an adjustable reading light above it, a small clothes closet, an uncomfortable-looking armchair upholstered in plastic, a battered writing desk and chair. An ordinary bedroom, in fact, except for a video camera high on the wall above the desk, a microphone hanging dead center from the ceiling, and a panel of sockets behind the bed for electrodes that the patients wear when they sleep. There is a large electric clock immediately above the headboard, and off to one side, pointing toward the ceiling, is an infrared lamp, a flared cylinder that looks like a giant's flashlight. The bedroom is insulated from the main corridor by a small room piled with junked equipment.

The sleep laboratory's observation room, next door, is twice the size of the bedroom, and is crammed with gear. A polygraph machine takes up most of the wall beneath a high window. Opposite are a steel sink, a draining board, and a regiment of mugs. (Tea-drinking is part of the ritual of sleep observation.) There are waist-high kitchen cabinets along the side walls, their tops piled with books, reprints of scientific papers, and files—mostly marked "Confidential"—along with a computer and a printer. Hanging from a rack on one wall are bunches of bright-colored electrodes. The rest of the furniture is basic: a wooden desk, a steel filing cabinet, two uncomfortable tubular-steel armchairs, a little table, a stool, a sagging easy chair without arms. In the center of the room stand a large television set and a video recorder, both of them elderly and battered.

Sharon Borrow, who is in charge of the laboratory, is a small, thin woman with startled eyes and a soft voice. She looks pale and tired, and there are dark circles under her eyes—understandably, given the nature of her work. She also seems, at first, preternaturally shy, but as the night goes on shyness merges with something else, something to do with the job itself: watching strangers while they sleep makes her uneasy; it seems to her an invasion of privacy, and she counteracts this with an intense concern to put people at ease, to soothe their anxieties and make them feel at home.

Above all, she is concerned for the patient, who, this particular evening, is an athletic young man in his middle twenties. He has a round face, a large mouth, wiry hair cut short, and businesslike spectacles. As is true of everyone who shows up at the sleep laboratory, the patient—call him Max—was referred by his local doctor to Dr. Crisp's unit at St. George's, where he was given a two-hour interview and a series of psychological tests. Max suffers from what is called a parasomnia, which "The Encyclopedia of Sleep and Sleep Disorders" defines as a disorder "of arousal, partial arousal, and sleep-stage transition," such as sleepwalking, rather than a primary sleep complaint, like insomnia or narcolepsy. Max's particular parasomnia, however, is different; it is a disorder quite common in very young children but rare in adults. Since long before he can remember, he has been rocking while he sleeps. Sometimes he rocks himself consciously, in order to get to sleep. "It's very comforting," he explains. "It's like being a baby. And because it's so comfortable I associate it with home. It's not something I do in a strange bed." But more often he rocks while he is asleep, sometimes gently, sometimes violently. This rocking



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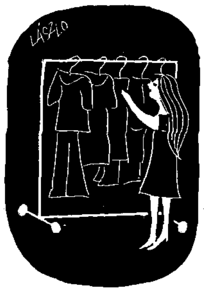
scares him, he says, because it means he is out of control. It also upsets whomever he happens to be in bed with—so much that, these days, he mostly prefers to sleep alone. "When I'm alone, I know I can rock and it won't upset anyone," he says.

Max is an articulate young man, highly intelligent and not at all reticent about his troubles, which seem to be many. As a baby, he was a head-banger—"I used to bang my head so violently that I'd wake my brother in the next room"—and he has always been frightened of the dark; he slept with a night-light beside his bed until he was older than he cares to say, and even now he can't sleep with closed windows or drawn curtains. He talks about his troubles compellingly, and in such detail that, although his manner is matter-of-fact, something else seems to be going on between the lines: he wants to understand, he wants to be helped, he wants to be absolved of his scary nighttime self.



That may happen; in due course, perhaps, he will be referred for psychotherapy. But that is not Sharon Borrow's brief. What she will do is wire him up to her polygraph machine and record elements of his physiological activity while he sleeps. That information, suitably annotated by her, will be analyzed by a computer, which will print out its findings and also turn them into an elegant, colored graph of his night's sleep: the time he spends in the five stages of sleep—including his dream time, in what is known as rapid-eye-movement, or REM sleep—and also his periods of wakefulness. "We are not here to cure sleep disorders," Sharon says. "Our role is an investigative one. All we can do is confirm a diagnosis, check out the senior resident's clinical impression against the polygraphic evidence. We can rule things out, refine a problem and make it clearer. Then it's up to the psychiatrists to decide what to do."

Max settles into the sagging armchair and tilts his head back warily, as though for a shave. Sharon cuts nine pieces of adhesive tape and lines them up on the edge of the sink. Then she takes a rope of electric leads from the rack on the wall and carefully disentangles them. The leads are bright pink, and each has a plug at one end and a little silver-chloride cup at the other. Using a huge syringe, she injects a saline jelly into the cups, and then she tapes them to Max's head: two under the chin, one above and one below each eye, one behind each ear, and one in the middle of his forehead. While she is doing this, she keeps up a steady flow of reassuring chat, explaining each move, asking Max if he is comfortable. He replies amiably, trying to seem unconcerned, but every so often, when she disappears from his sight, he rolls his eyes like a frightened horse. There are eleven wires in all, and the last two have to be fixed to the back of his scalp—a process that is not easy, because his hair, though short, is thick and springy. Sharon dunks a strip of gauze into an ether-based physiological glue, parts his hair with a comb, presses one electrode into place, slaps the sticky gauze over it, then dries it with cold air from a compressor. By the time she has finished with the second electrode, the laboratory stinks of ether, and Max looks as if he were wearing two thin-spread strips of concrete on the back of his head.

At eleven-fifteen, we go into the bedroom, and Max, wearing his Medusa's mane of wires, climbs tentatively into bed. Sharon plugs the electrodes into the panel behind the bed, plumps his pillows, shows him an electric bell he can ring if he needs her, opens the curtains and the window just so, turns off the light, and goes back to the laboratory to check the equipment. Once she is sure that the polygraph, the video, and the bell are working properly, she switches them off and returns to the bedroom. She tells Max to read until he feels sleepy, and then buzz her.

Each patient spends two nights at the hospital, the first to acclimatize him to the strange bed and stranger headgear, the second to record his sleep. But parasomnias are quirky and unreliable—sometimes they happen, sometimes they don't—so Max will be recorded both nights.

At twelve-thirty, he rings the bell, and we go back in to say good night. Sharon fusses around, making sure that the bell is where it should be, the glass of water is full, the bed and the window and the curtains are the way he wants them. He seems quite easy now with the electronic snakes in his hair, and his eyelids are heavy.

Sharon pauses at the door. "From now on, you won't be alone," she says apologetically.

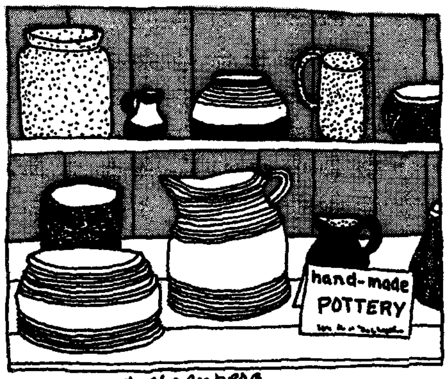
Back in the observation room, she switches on the equipment again. The image on the video monitor is cloudy, badly defined. Max, lying moodily on his back, is easy to see in the infrared light, but you can read the clock behind his head only by comparing it with its twin above the polygraph.

The polygraph itself is an intricate-looking machine, about three feet long and shaped like a table. At one end are ranks of knobs and switches, a broad sheet of paper unrolls itself through a slot near the center, and in between is a row of twelve horizontal pens, of which only the farther six are in use. The first pair, the electro-oculogram (EOG), record the eye movements; the middle pair, the electroencephalogram (EEG), record electrical activity in the brain; the third pair, the electromyogram (EMG), record muscle activity from the electrodes under Max's chin. The polygraph paper unfolds itself from a huge box beneath the machine, moves up through the slot, across the table and over its edge, then slowly and silently folds itself into a metal tray. This will continue until Sharon is convinced that the patient is sleeping soundly. Then she will switch the recording from the polygraph to a tape machine, and she herself will try to catch some sleep. In an average night, a third of a mile of paper will be covered by the pens' delicate, nervous marks.

THE pattern of human sleep is more or less universal. When Max is settling down but is still awake, the EEG records what are known as alpha waves, which are low voltage and fast (eight to thirteen cycles per second); he blinks periodically, making the EOG jump; the pens of the EMG zigzag wildly when he moves. After less than ten minutes, the brain waves begin to slow down, blinking is replaced by slow, rolling movements of the eyes, the EMG flattens, and Max drifts into Stage 1 sleep. This is a nebulous state from which one can as easily go back into waking as on into sleep. Real sleep, Stage 2, begins either with the first of a succession of sleep spindles or with a K-complex. Sleep spindles are short bursts of fast EEG activity, and they get their name from how they look on the graph—jagged and closely bunched. A K-complex also has a distinctive EEG signature: a sharp high-voltage negative wave followed by a slow positive wave. Gradually, the EEG waves become larger and slower, eye movement stops, the EMG flattens out. When these large, slow waves—delta waves, they are called—occupy twenty per cent of one page of the graph, the subject is in Stage 3 sleep; when they take up more than fifty per cent, he is in Stage 4, the deepest sleep of all. This is the time for sleepwalking and night terrors—parasomnias—and it can last for forty-five minutes, and often longer.

Falling asleep is like deep-sea diving: the progress is down and down, toward deeper and deeper sleep—downward from Stage 1 to Stage 4—while the brain waves expand and slow and increase their voltage, from alpha waves to delta waves. Then, suddenly, without warning, the sleeper comes up for air: blood pressure varies, heart rhythm and breathing quicken, oxygen consumption in the brain increases, its neurons fire as busily as they do during waking, and the EEG records low-voltage, mixed-frequency brain waves. Although the body is still sleeping, the brain is behaving almost as it does when the body is awake.

There are two major differences between this kind of sleep and the waking state. The first, and oddest, is that although the body is virtually as still as death, the eyes, beneath their closed lids, are moving wildly—which is why the phase is called rapid-eye-movement sleep. (Most mammals—with a few incongruous exceptions, such as the spiny anteater—have regular periods of REM sleep, and so do some birds and reptiles. The discovery, in 1953, of this strange physical characteristic was the breakthrough that changed all subsequent sleep research.) The second major difference is that in REM sleep the EMG is usually flat; in other words, the skeletal muscles are paralyzed, and movement is impossible. Another, more accurate name for this condition is paradoxical sleep: the brain is active, the body is shut down. Instead of responding to the signals from his brain, getting up, and going about his business, the sleeper dreams.



In a normal night, REM sleep occurs four or five times in spells of ten to thirty minutes. The first REM sleep is usually brief—about fifteen minutes in adults—but as night goes on the dreaming periods lengthen and become more frequent. The average sleeper in an average night dreams for an hour and a half or two hours. If he lives out his allotted threescore years and ten, he will spend about twenty-three of them asleep and, however little he subsequently remembers, between five and six of those twenty-three years vividly dreaming.

The paper unfolds itself steadily through the polygraph. By one-ten, the EEG waves are spacious and slow, and Max is in Stage 4 sleep. Sharon bends over the graph, studying it for long periods, checking the pens, plotting his progress aloud for my benefit. Every so often, the EEG pens zigzag frantically, in ways that seem unrelated to the peaceful figure on the video monitor.

"Artifacts," Sharon says. "Maybe someone has switched a light on somewhere in the building. It's not physiological. Believe me."

Earlier in the evening, the senior resident, Dr. Tony Katz, had told me that the polygraph was a notoriously tricky instrument to read, and that Sharon was one of the few people in the country who knew how to do it accurately. It seems that she is proving him right.

As we watch, Max stirs and partly wakes. The pens recording the EMG go briefly crazy. He settles again and lies still, but the EMG goes on twitching.

"Muscle contraction," Sharon says.

Ten minutes later, Max half wakes. He drinks some water, rearranges his pillows, rolls over onto his stomach, slips partly into sleep, and then surfaces again. He pulls the blanket up, pushes it back, moves fretfully from

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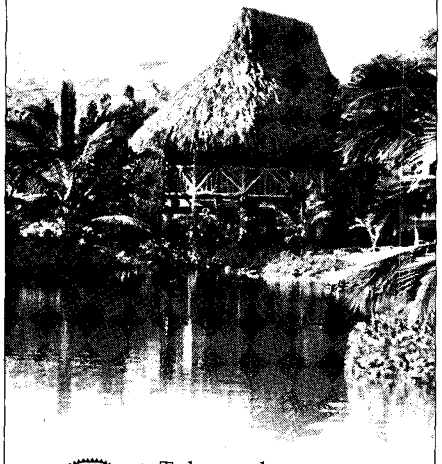

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side to side. All this muscular activity provokes an insane drumming from the EMG pens. Finally, he rolls to his side, one leg bent, the other straight, and seems to sleep.

Sharon fetches a rolled-up mat of foam rubber, sheets, a pillow, and a duvet, and prepares to camp out in the observation room, if and when Max ever settles.

By two-fifteen, he appears to be sleeping peacefully, but Sharon, who is constantly checking the graph, is not convinced. Whatever his state, nothing much is happening, so I call it a day and cross the corridor to a bedroom I have been allotted, opposite the laboratory. Sharon says she will wake me if Max starts rocking. The night nurse, sitting in the corridor outside, legs propped on a chair, rug over her knees, looks up from her fat Nevil Shute paperback and smiles wearily. I undress, climb into bed, and drift off almost immediately.

And almost immediately Sharon is knocking on the door, urgently whispering, "It's started."

I pull on my clothes and look at my watch: two-thirty. When I blunder back across the corridor, the night nurse waves ironically.

Max is lying on his side, rocking quickly and rhythmically. To and fro, to and fro. The pens of the polygraph scratch and shudder. While I watch the video monitor, Sharon pores over the graph. He's sleeping, she says, but she can't tell which stage he is in. She won't know until she has examined the graph in detail in the morning. She checks the clock and scribbles a note on the graph, and then we both stand in front of the monitor and watch, fascinated.

A sleeping person is always a mystery, present and absent at the same time, seemingly peaceful yet really off on wild adventures in strange landscapes. But this is different. Max is not dreaming—that much, at least, we know from the polygraph. He is in the grip of some primeval rhythm, to and fro, a strategy he probably developed as an infant to allay his anxieties and soothe himself to sleep. According to Sharon, "to go from head-banging to rocking is a triumph of adaptation." But gradually this adaptive strategy has acquired a life of its own, and now it takes him over when his defenses are down. No wonder it scares him.

And no wonder Sharon is embarrassed by the nature of her work. I feel that we shouldn't be there, watching, commenting, taking notes. What we are witnessing is something intensely private—so private that even Max doesn't know about it. It is as though we were watching his doppelgänger, his secret, hidden night self.

For five minutes, he goes on rocking rhythmically and obsessively. To and fro, to and fro. Then it's over, as suddenly as it started. He sighs heavily and sinks again into sleep. The graph steadies.

Max is sleeping deeply when I get up at seven. At nine-thirty, he is still sleeping and looks set to go on until noon. I leave Sharon to it.

THE following evening, Sharon takes the precaution of letting Max choose his own pillows—he likes them soft. He seems easy and relaxed. He has had a swim and a long walk, he says, and he feels good. Soon after midnight, he is ready for sleep.

Sharon has adjusted the video camera, and the image is clearer and sharper than it was last night. Max lies on his back, hands clasped demurely over his stomach. The electrodes under his chin look like an ornamental beard. Without moving, he is asleep in minutes.

"It's the pillows," Sharon says. "Comforting as well as comfortable."

The same endless sheet of paper is unwinding through the polygraph, but this time the nearer six pens are in action, giving a parallel reading of the two nights' sleep. The difference is extraordinary—particularly the EMG, which tonight is almost flat. Clearly, the night of acclimatization has had an effect: the restlessness and anxiety have disappeared, and Max is sleeping easily, as though he were enjoying himself.

After about an hour, Max turns onto his side and presses the top of his head against the wall, like a baby cuddling against his mother. Then he settles back into deep sleep. We sip tea, Sharon reads and I watch, the paper feeds itself smoothly through the machine, the pens do their work in silence. The only sounds are the whirring of a fan and, on the monitor, Max's deep, slow breathing.

At one-thirty, Max wakes, drinks some water, stretches, rolls onto his stomach, then onto his back, and finally settles on his side with one leg drawn up and his hands tucked beneath it. Sharon checks the graph, then watches him attentively. The expression on her face is protective. When a moth flies in through his open window, she says, in a worried voice, "He's frightened of moths." But, of course, although we can see the creature in the infrared light, Max could not, even if he were awake.

"Night can be very threatening," Sharon says. "Things loom larger at two in the morning than at midday."

I remark that Max seems much more peaceful than he was last night.

"I've heard some patients say that the sleep lab itself is the cure," Sharon replies. "And why not? They're being observed, measured, contained. Someone is taking them seriously."

By 2 A.M., we are both sleepy. Sharon brings in her mattress roll and unstraps it. "I don't think anything is going to happen," she says.

This time, however, she is wrong. Ten minutes later, Max wakes partly, yawns prodigiously, then immediately begins to rock. The recording pens set up their hullabaloo. He rocks from side to side, raptly and steadily. The movement is eerie, intense, ritualistic.

The rocking goes on for five long minutes. When it began, Max was technically awake. By the time it has finished, he is asleep. After ten minutes of apparent sleep, he wakes again, drinks more water, blows his nose loudly. More yawning and twisting about. He seems unable to get comfortable, and at two-twenty-eight he starts rocking again. This time, according to the polygraph, he is fully awake; the rhythm is determined, infantile, primitive. It lasts for just one minute. Then he sighs deeply and slips straight into Stage 2 sleep.

Sharon looks relieved. "I don't know why he rocks," she says, "but it certainly does the trick. Look how sweetly he's sleeping."

The next morning, Max is up and about by eight o'clock, cheerful and pleased with himself. "Slept like a baby," he announces. "I feel great."

When Sharon tells him yes, he did rock, and it's all on the graph and videotape, he seems doubly pleased.

"We'll analyze the material and be in touch," she says. "There'll be a follow-up interview in a couple of weeks."

She, too, seems pleased: by the good shape her patient is in on this fine morning, and by the fact that his parasomnia manifested itself and she has the material she needs.

I give Max a lift into town through the morning rush hour. He is relaxed and talkative, but what he talks about is the subject that obsesses many of the young in these hard times: how difficult it is to find a job, even with the best qualifications. He does not mention his sleep problems, and when I ask casually if he thinks Dr. Katz will recommend psychotherapy, he shrugs and says airily, "I'm not really bothered by the rocking. In fact, I rather like it. It's comforting—it sends me to sleep. It's other people who object."

"Then why go to the sleep lab?"

Another dismissive shrug. "I wanted to know. I wanted to be sure. Anyway, they say it's a very rare type of behavior. Maybe it'll be useful for them to have it on record."

When I drop him off, he strides away down Marylebone Road, seemingly full of purpose—a man refreshed, relieved; absolved, for the moment, of his troubles. Perhaps Sharon was right: the sleep laboratory itself is the cure.

I NEVER found out what happened to Max. When I went back to Atkinson Morley's, three weeks later, his case was filed away, like all the others, in a file marked "Confidential"; and in sleep research, as in psychoanalysis, confidentiality is an inviolable part of the deal between the patient and the clinician. I was told just one detail, and that had to do with sleep research, not with Max. Parasomnias usually start in Stage 4 sleep. "Sleepwalkers move from deepest sleep to waking without being cognitively aware," Sharon said. "They are awakened by an internal event." Max, however, rocked when he was awake, and he rocked in Stages 1 and 2 sleep. He even rocked in REM sleep, which is theoretically impossible, since the muscles are paralyzed in REM. But he never rocked in Stage 3 or 4. "Academically, it's a very interesting case," Sharon said.

I was back at the laboratory to find out what it was like to have my own sleep monitored. Sleep, even when you are sleeping with someone else, is the most private of all experiences. Your dreams may be full of people and places and strange events, but you share them with no one—at least while

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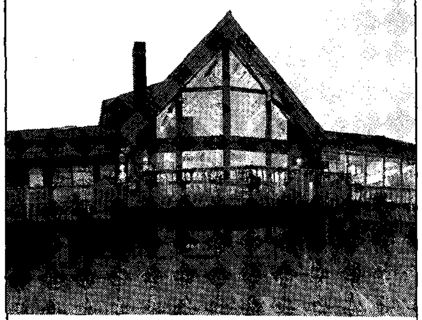

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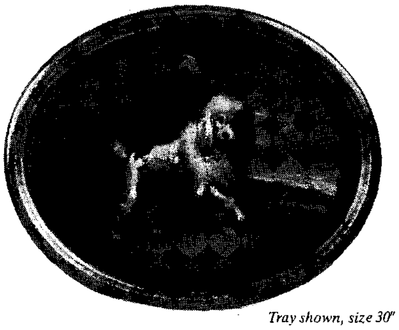

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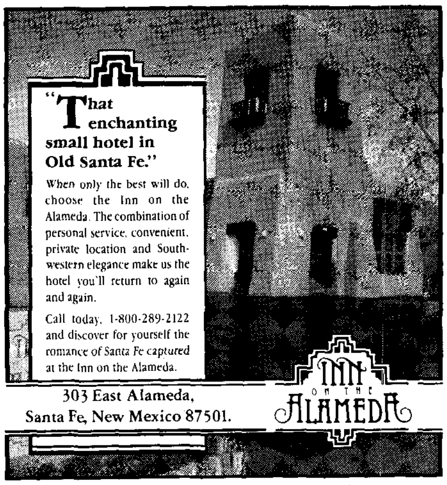
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they are happening. And your activity—the tossing and turning and snoring, the partial waking and broken fragments of speech—all take place without your knowing anything about them. So, in principle, it seems unnatural for a person or a machine to be watching, recording, analyzing a process that is a total mystery to you yourself. But knowing of Sharon's embarrassment, even after years of experience, made it easier.

I sat in the beat-up easy chair while she attached the electrodes. First, she rubbed the skin with industrial alcohol, "to facilitate contact," she said. It felt like a bracing aftershave. Then the electrodes went on: chin, near the eyes, center of the forehead, behind the ears. They felt weightless, not at all uncomfortable. There was a pause, while the room filled with the stench of ether. Sharon parted what hair is left on the back of my head and held the electrode in place gently with one finger. The strips of glue-soaked gauze felt icy at first, then stiff as wood when they dried. They seemed to complete a circle with the electrode in the middle of my forehead, like a hat one size too small, but within a couple of minutes the sense of restriction had gone, and I was no longer bothered by them.

Sharon gathered the leads from the electrodes into a neat pink bunch and handed it to me. As we walked next door to the bedroom, she questioned me solicitously. Did I feel comfortable? Was there anything I needed? Was there anything she'd forgotten? While she checked the equipment, plumped the pillows, and filled a glass of water at the sink in the adjoining junk room, I looked out the enormous window at the spread of lights in the dormitory suburbs to the south. I could see cars on the A-3 bypass, and the brightly lit windows of a train moving briefly between two masses of shadow. But immediately beyond the hospital there was nothing but blackness. A pleasant breeze blew through the window, stirring the curtains.

I got into bed carefully, trying not to muddle the electrode leads while Sharon plugged them into the panel at the head of the bed. She went next door to test the equipment, then returned, removed one of the electrodes under my chin, reinjected it with saline jelly, taped it back in place, and checked it against a green-and-red dial on the panel. "We have a problem with contact and impedance," she said. I twisted around to watch. No matter how much she fussed with the contact, the needle on the little dial refused to move from red to green. Finally, she said, "I think it's the dial that's not working. The polygraph will pick it up O.K."

I asked what would happen to the electrodes when I moved around or rolled over in my sleep. "Nothing at all," she said. "In a couple of minutes, you won't even know they're there."

And she was right. Going to bed with electrodes taped to your skull and knowing that they will record, while you sleep, things you yourself know nothing about—physiological events inside your brain, your muscular activity, your eye movements—seems like a surefire way of ruining a night's rest. And at first the electronic headdress felt awkward: the electrodes got in the way when I moved; they made me lie stiff-necked, like a figure on a medieval tomb. But we take technology for granted now; seeing yourself on a television screen, hearing your voice played back on a tape recorder, reading off your life statistics from a computer printout have become part of the natural process. Within minutes, I had forgotten all about the electrodes. Even so, I was glad I was undergoing only a routine recording—the kind they give to insomniacs, not to those who suffer from parasomnias—for it meant that the video camera and the microphone would be switched off. No one would actually be watching me sleep; no one would hear me snore.

Sharon said good night and turned off the lights. At my request, the curtains were open, and a faint sodium-orange light from the window emphasized the strange proportions of the room: long and narrow and absurdly high. The wallpaper went up to what would already have been a fair height—eight or nine feet—but the room rose, painted not papered, six feet above that. It was the kind of misshapen space you come across more often in dreams than in waking life.

I lay watching the shadows and the stripes of orange light on the distant

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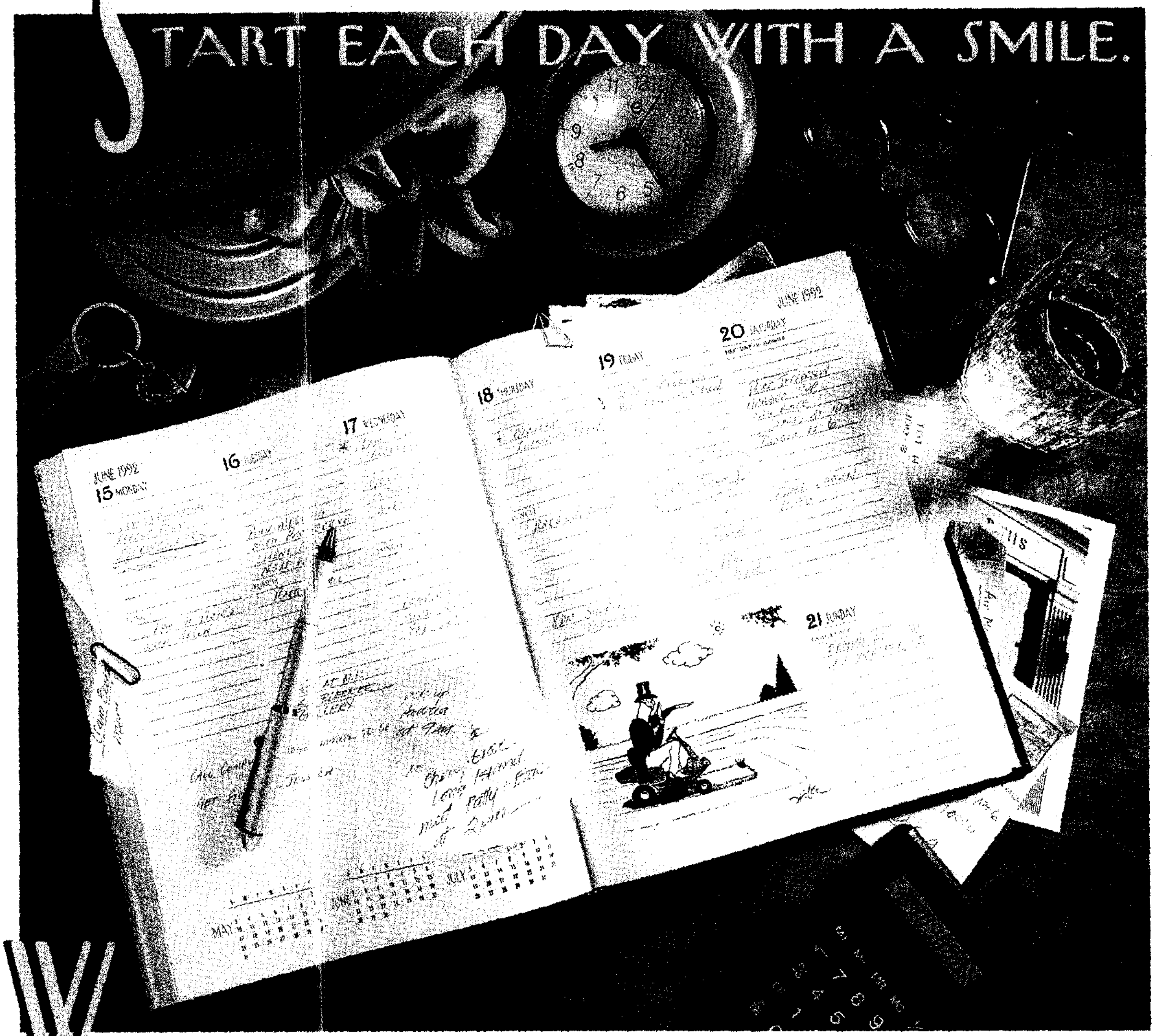

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ceiling. I could hear the hum of traffic on the bypass and the mechanical whine of a generator, faint and monotonous, from some far wing of the building. I pictured the polygraph needles scratching away in the next room and thought guiltily but vaguely that I, too, should be writing it all down.

The next thing I knew, the room was full of morning light. I rolled over and looked at my watch: it was six o'clock. I had had no dreams that I could remember, the glass of water by the bed was untouched, the electrodes on my head were all in place. I was grateful for such a sweet night's sleep, but I also felt that I had somehow missed the point of being there.

Sharon had told me she always woke at seven, however late she went to sleep, and I could see no reason to disturb her. I turned away from the window, and the next time I woke it was seven o'clock. Sharon, looking scrubbed and cheerful, came in when I rang the bell, and carefully untaped the electrodes from my head. When I told her that I'd had a great night's sleep, she seemed relieved as well as pleased.

The day was warm and bright, and I went to the window to sniff the morning air. The bedroom was at the back of the hospital. Beyond was a little field with a marquee and a red wind sock. (Atkinson Morley's is the regional headquarters for neurosurgical injuries, and the field is a landing strip for air ambulances.) As I watched, a hawk alit in one of the trees surrounding the field and settled down to eat its breakfast. Beyond the field were a gasometer, a short section of bypass, scattered houses and trees, then the rolling Surrey hills.

I showered and dressed, and joined Sharon in the observation room for coffee and cornflakes. She said that it would be at least a month before the computer finished analyzing the polygraph readings and produced a graph of my night's sleep. She pulled a section of folded paper from the metal tray at the instrument's foot and spread it out. The peaks and dips and nervous squiggles appeared to have nothing to do with my deep, dreamless sleep, but she studied them carefully and seemed satisfied.

"Look at this." She pointed to a sequence of curves on the EOG that looked like the kind of waves a surfer dreams about. "That's a really classic rolling-eye movement." From the way she spoke, I realized she was paying me a compliment.

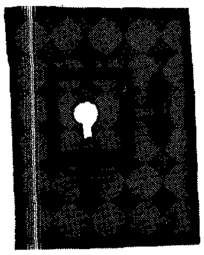
And why not? I thought. I've done everything a model patient should do; I've slept like a baby.

But not according to the computer, which eventually produced a printout and a statistical analysis of the various stages of my sleep, as well as a colored graph. What had felt like a long night's rest had in fact lasted just over six and a half hours, and in that period I had awakened and fallen back to sleep twenty-three times before my final waking. Most of those wakings were so brief that they hardly registered on the graph's horizontal time scale, but one had lasted a full ten minutes, and the grand total for the night was forty-three minutes. Yet the only time I could remember waking up was when I rolled over and looked at my watch at six o'clock. I thought that on that occasion I had gone straight back to sleep, but according to the polygraph I had been awake for a full five minutes. I had awakened momentarily from Stage 4 sleep a couple of times and from REM five times; the rest of the wakings were from Stage 2. Stage 2 does not count as deep sleep, but it is still real sleep, unlike Stage 1, so perhaps that is why I knew nothing about my waking episodes.

I also remembered nothing about my dreams, although I had had the standard five periods of REM sleep—two of them broken by momentary wakings and relapses to Stage 2. I had also been dreaming for ten minutes immediately before I woke at six, and was having a fragmentary dream when I woke for good an hour later. But none of the dreams had left a trace behind them.

In other words, the scientifically recorded reality of my night's sleep bore no relationship at all to my subjective experience of it. Although I had had the impression of a long night of dreamless and undisturbed rest, in fact the time from my first dropping off to my final waking up was a mere six hours and thirty-two minutes, and during that period I had really slept for only five hours and forty-nine minutes, including sixty-five minutes in REM sleep. According to the computer, this gave me a "sleep efficiency" of eighty-nine per cent.

Statistically, this was about right for my age group, whose sleep efficiency averages ninety per cent. I was awake longer than the average (eleven per cent of the time instead of eight per cent), spent less than average time in Stage 1 (two per cent instead of ten per cent), about average time in Stage 2 (fifty-six per cent), far longer in deep sleep, Stages 3 and 4 (fifteen per cent instead of three per cent), and a little below average in REM (seventeen per cent instead of twenty-three per cent). There was just one very brief episode of "movement time" and eight tiny "minor arousals," which are scarcely more than muscular twitches. (Technically, a "minor arousal" is defined as a burst of muscular activity that occupies at least twenty per cent of an "epoch," or page of the graph; a burst of fifty per cent or more is called "movement time.") Together, they amounted to less than a minute. (Each page represents a third of a minute.) That meant that the computer rated the movement time and its percentage as zero. So at least my impression of having slept peacefully was justified.



But if I hadn't tossed and turned I hadn't slept much, either. I was dismayed by the number of times I had apparently awakened, and I put it to Sharon that an insomniac's graph would not have looked much different from mine. Not true, she said. It was just a question of age: as you get older, you need less sleep; you spend progressively more time awake and in light sleep, less in deep sleep and REM. But that was not how it had felt, and I have had enough bad nights in my time to know the difference.

I slept badly when I was young, woke often, and was troubled by my dreams. When I was around thirty and my life seemed to be coming apart in my hands, I had a brief period when I was unable to sleep more than a couple of hours each night. But that is a classic symptom of depression, and thirty years later I was no longer depressed. Or, rather, no longer clinically depressed. Instead, as I grew older I seemed to sleep better, more deeply, more gratefully each night. By the time I had reached my middle fifties, I could hardly wait to go to bed at night, and often found it hard to think of a good reason for getting up the next morning. Maybe that, too, was a symptom of depression. If so, it was a different kind of depression, and one I had less trouble living with. Now, in my sixties, I find that what may once have been a symptom has settled into habit, and I have given up making excuses for my partiality to sleep. The fact is, I am addicted to it, the way I'm addicted to coffee, and will take whatever is on offer: eight hours is fine, and seven seems like too little. I drop off quickly and usually remember nothing—not even my dreams. Of course, I don't wake altogether refreshed. After a certain age, someone has said, if you wake up without any aches and pains it means you are dead. But at least I don't feel cheated. And that is precisely how I felt when I learned from the polygraph that my good night's sleep had in fact been an hour and a half shorter than usual, and that for eleven per cent of the time—forty-three minutes—I had been awake.

My first reaction was disbelief: I felt that I had slept well, but the machines said I hadn't; one of us had to be wrong. Or perhaps we were both reporting accurately two quite different events, and the problem with sleep research was the same as the problem with most literary biographies: no matter how accurate the facts and painstaking the methods—all the survivors interviewed, the sources double-checked, the footnotes amazing—the results are insidiously skewed. What is missing is everything that makes the subject's work his own: the constantly shifting give-and-take between him and the other people in his life, allied to the feel, the tone, of a specific place at a specific time—Paris in the twenties, London in the sixties. What is missing, in other words, is how it felt to be that person in that world—all the details and overtones that are simply not available, whatever the good will and faultless research, to someone who wasn't there and can't make the necessary leap of imagination. That was also true in the sleep laboratory: with an event as subjective as sleep, the polygraph recording and the computer-generated information were bound to be partial, but imagination was not appropriate

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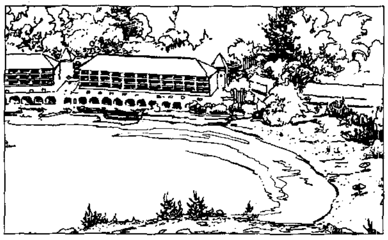

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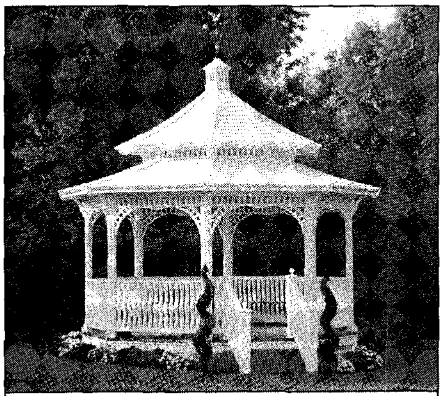

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Yet I wasn't imagining how I had felt. A good night's sleep is restorative—among other reasons, Sharon explained, because during slow-wave sleep there are large secretions of anabolic hormone that help tissue synthesis and regeneration—and when I woke, I felt restored. When I told Sharon that I probably would have been feeling lousy if I'd known that I had had so little sleep, she said, "We all wake more than we think we do."

It was an answer that deepened the mystery instead of explaining it. After all, it is a curious kind of wakefulness that can occur without your being aware of it. Sharon and I seemed to be using the same ordinary words to mean utterly different things. So I looked up "wakefulness" in "The Encyclopedia of Sleep and Sleep Disorders":

> A brain state that occurs in the absence of sleep in an otherwise healthy individual. It is the state of being awake that is characterized by EEG wave patterns dominated by alpha rhythm, or electrocortical activity, between 8 Hz and 13 Hz. This alpha activity is most pronounced when the eyes are closed and the subject is relaxed.... In addition to the characteristic alpha activity of wakefulness, there are also beta rhythms, which occur particularly with increased alertness, motor activity and in response to environmental stimuli. Wakefulness is often subdivided into quiet wakefulness, where an individual is resting in a relaxed condition, compared with a period of active wakefulness, when the individual is more alert and may be engaged in talking or other motor activities.

Now I knew. In Sharon's terms, most of the wakefulness I had experienced was technical, not subjectively real: a change of brain rhythm, a physiological event so brief that it registered as no more than a double vertical line on the computer graph. For the layman, the kind of waking that sets the pens of the polygraph jiggling is as paradoxical as REM sleep seemed when it was first discovered.

That in itself was no surprise. It is one of the truisms of sleep research that many insomniacs, when wired up to a polygraph, will swear they never got a wink of sleep, while the machine registers a near-normal night's repose. It is also true that the brain remains almost as active during sleep as it is when awake. Earlier in this century, physiologists like Sherrington and Pavlov assumed that the purpose of sleep was to rest the brain as well as the body. This has now been shown to be untrue. In his brilliant study of sleep, "The Dreaming Brain," Professor J. Allan Hobson writes:

> When microelectrodes were inserted into the cerebral cortex ... investigators ... observed that as many neurons turned on as turned off during sleep, and that almost all the cells in the brain were spectacularly active during REM sleep. Clearly, a general theory of neural rest during sleep can be only partially correct and is particularly controverted.

In other words, sleep itself is paradoxical, a condition in which none of the waking rules apply, including the rules about waking itself. Waking, dreaming, and all the other mental events that take place while we sleep leave, at best, only a passing trace on the memory—a trace that usually vanishes unless you write it down straightaway. Mental life goes on in a pure culture, as it were, unconnected with the senses. It is often deeply tinged with emotion, but that, too, takes place in a pure culture; it connects with your waking life only later, when you think about it—when you literally take it to heart.

And that is precisely the area that cannot, as yet, be measured in a laboratory. Sleep is a comparatively new field of research, because it depends on technology that has been developed only recently and is still being developed. Neuroscientists now have extraordinarily refined techniques for recording what happens in the brain, when it is awake or asleep, but there are still no precise methods for measuring subjective experience. Until there are, sleep researchers and laymen are going to have trouble understanding one another. "He sleeps well who knows not that he sleeps ill," Francis Bacon wrote. We define wakefulness in terms of consciousness, of being awake to the fact that we are awake. Sharon and her colleagues define it as something else entirely. From my experience in the sleep laboratory, I assumed that that something else was highly technical, something registered in microvolts and recorded on graph paper and computer printouts. But when I asked Sharon "You mean sleep is nothing like we imagine it?" all she said was "It's very subjective."

—A. ALVAREZ

●

I poured over the proof for typos, my wife poured over the proof, my friends poured over it. I was certain that my job hung in the balance.—*Robert Wyatt in the Nashville Tennessean.*

It does.

BOOKS

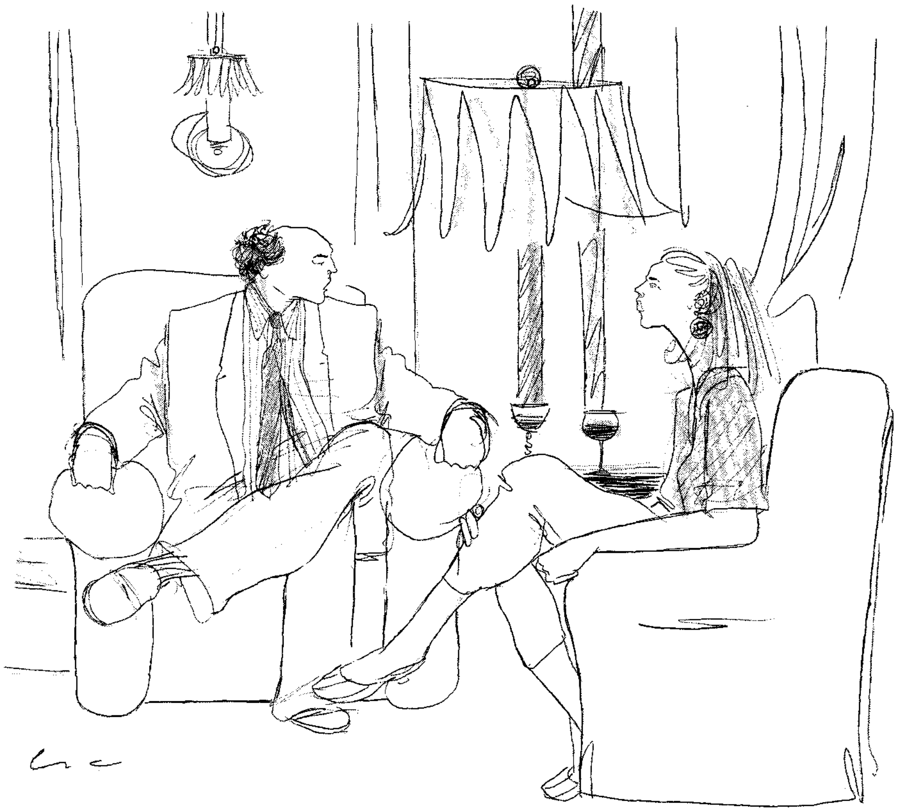
Good Women of Sichuan

IN "Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China" (Simon & Schuster; $25) Jung Chang, who teaches at London University, recounts her grandmother's life, her mother's, and her own and so tells the history of modern China as its victims lived it. Her family chronicle resembles a popular novel that stars strong, beautiful women and provides cameo roles for famous men, like Zhou Enlai. But "Wild Swans" is no romance. It's a story, at once grim and appealing, about the survival of a Chinese family through a century of disaster. Ms. Chang takes us all over China, and into all sorts of institutions, from the harem to the gulag; wherever she goes, her adroitness in explaining Chinese customs and expectations operates as local coloring always should—it heightens our awareness of the human in the parochial.

Her book begins in Manchuria, where her grandmother Yu-fang was born in 1909. Yu-fang was a beauty, and the most valuable asset of her father, an ambitious small-town policeman whose career was stalled by the collapse of the Manchu empire, in 1911. Her feet were bound, and her father saw to it that she learned music, drawing, and embroidery, and, when she was fifteen, made his fortune by selling her to a warlord as a concubine. Yu-fang's daughter, the author's mother, De-hong, was born in 1931. The warlord's childless wife took De-hong to raise as her own, but while the master lay on his deathbed Yu-fang kidnapped her baby and escaped. A few years later, she married a sixty-five-year-old widower, Dr. Xia. His grown children resented their beautiful young ex-concubine stepmother, so the Doctor gave them all his property, moved to another, bigger Manchurian town with Yu-fang and De-hong, and started all over again.

Dr. Xia is this story's Sarastro—a noble, wise, and kindly patriarch. His benevolence, combined with his professional success, should have assured his family's happiness. But the warlords' violent, unstable rule over Manchuria was succeeded by the Japanese occupation—a reign of terror that extended even to little schoolgirls like De-hong. Dr. Xia was an authentic humanitarian: his family risked their lives giving what help they could to victims of the Japanese, and after the war they also helped Japanese fleeing massacre, Communists hiding from the Kuomintang, and Kuomintang members persecuted by the Communists. Foot-binding had left Yu-fang crippled and in constant pain, but she hobbled through her days working for others with peppery good nature.

Yu-fang accepted the tradition that a woman showed her love by agreeing with her menfolk; De-hong insisted on thinking for herself. Like her parents, she had greeted the Kuomintang forces as liberators when they arrived, in 1945, but their ineffectuality at everything except corruption disillusioned her, and she risked her life again by joining the Communist underground. She met the author's father, Shou-yu Chang, after his Communist guerrilla unit helped capture their town, in 1948; they were married the following year. He was ten years older than De-hong and came from Sichuan, where his father's textile factory had been bankrupted by the warlords' extortions during the worldwide Great Depression of the nineteen-thirties. Shou-yu had spent several years roaming (and starving) at the bottom of Chinese society before he joined the Communist Party, in 1938; he made his way to Mao's army in Yan'an in 1940. In his certitude, Shou-yu may remind you of Bazarov in "Fathers and Sons," though the young Communist was even surer of his purpose than Turgenev's young nihilist. In 1949 the Changs were transferred to Sichuan, and, in time, Shou-yu became deputy director of the Public Affairs Department for the province, overseeing culture and propaganda, and his wife became the head of the Public Affairs Department of the Eastern District of Chengdu, the provincial capital. Shou-yu insisted that his family avoid even the appearance of favoritism or privilege; when Yu-fang came to visit her pregnant daughter, Shou-yu shipped her back to Manchuria, because De-hong's rank in the civil service did not entitle her to have a parent living with her. After De-hong was promoted, in 1951, her parents came to stay. The Doctor died in 1952, but Yu-fang lived until 1970—long



"At the moment, I am seeing only myself."

enough to tell her grandchildren stories, give them hugs, and, except when Communist policy made everybody eat in public canteens, cook them goodies.

The Changs had five children—the author's older sister, Jung herself (she was born in 1952), and three younger brothers. Their childhood was punctuated by incomprehensible separations; when Jung was only three, she and the other children were sent to government nurseries while her mother was being detained and investigated as a "hidden counterrevolutionary." Ms. Chang recalls spells of "tranquil and loving" family life after her mother was cleared, when she lived in what she later realized was a "privileged cocoon"—privileged, at least, in contrast to the seven million Sichuanese who starved to death in the famine caused by Mao's Great Leap Forward, of 1958-61. But Mao's next campaign, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which began in the mid-sixties, scattered the Chang family and shattered Shou-yu physically and psychologically.

Ms. Chang's mother and father never discussed their convictions or their difficulties with their children. The young people learned only years later how long their parents had been struggling to obey the Communist Party's commands—to betray their own judgments, deny realities they observed, and substitute Party orders for conscience. During the Cultural Revolution, they at last gave up trying to turn themselves into Party hacks. In 1966, as the denunciations and violence spread, Shou-yu wrote to Mao to protest the persecution of innocent people. Jung Chang later discovered that, when De-hong reminded him that their children would suffer if the parents were stigmatized as "capitalist roaders," he asked, "What about the children of the victims?"

Though their parents were vilified, beaten, jailed, and finally sent to penal colonies, Ms. Chang and the other children unthinkingly embraced the cult of Mao. They joined the Red Guards, and invaded the homes of "class enemies" exactly as Red Guard posses had invaded *their* home. (Those posses had made her father burn his books.) Ms. Chang explains that she was able to retain her faith both in her parents' goodness and in Mao's leadership by convincing herself that evil counsellors were misleading the Chairman. The Chang parents knew Party bigwigs, but the author only once glimpsed Chairman Mao, during a Red Guard pilgrimage to Beijing: she was standing among a hysterically cheering crowd when his car drove past their ranks. Mao seems to have been a man whose greatest happiness was hating, but his personality didn't infect all the Chinese people. The Chang youngsters, each living out his own picaresque novel as China disintegrated, encountered very little hostility. When the middle brother joined a tough street gang, its members treated him as a kind of mascot, and Ms. Chang herself, during the months when she worked in a factory, found the same kind of good-natured acceptance. The children were appalled to discover how poor, and how poorly educated, most Chinese were, for until their parents' downfall they had lived in an apparatchiks' compound, and had been taught in school how lucky they were compared with the children in capitalist countries, who had to leave school to support their parents. (Ms. Chang is a good describer of landscapes and cityscapes as well as of people, and the impression I get from travelling with her and her relatives across the century and the nation is that China isn't a poor country but, rather, a rich country pauperized by hundreds of years of misgovernment.) After the schools were closed, the children were sent to work in peasant communes, and there they saw the direst poverty of all. But the hard life hadn't made the peasants hard people: when Ms. Chang's sister married, in 1970, their gifts—"a handful of dried noodles, a pound of soybeans, and a few eggs, wrapped carefully in red straw paper and tied with straw in a fancy knot"—represented real sacrifices.

De-hong was released from penal camp and rehabilitated by a Communist Party tribunal in 1971; Shou-yu was freed in 1972 but died before he could be rehabilitated. The author's portrait of her father is full of insight and delicacy. At the height of his power, he was worshipped by the Sichuanese for his incorruptibility. But the reader finds this paragon an unsympathetic human being: he was harsh to his wife and children as well as to his Sichuanese clan. His wife's accusation "You are a good Communist, but a

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rotten husband!" is something of an understatement. Our feelings change only after Shou-yu, toward the end of his life, apologizes for his devotion to the Party at the expense of his family, and confides to his sons that he doubts whether his life of dedication has really helped build a better China. Even then, though, he finds himself unable to compromise his principles: when the author asks him to put in a word with his friends on the enrollment committee to help her get into the university in Sichuan, he refuses, saying, "It would not be fair to people with no power." We come to know Shou-yu as a daughter knows a parent, and in the end we see him as a tragic archetype—an idealist whose ideal betrays him. Luckily for the Changs, De-hong was more realistic. She worked the bureaucracy on behalf of her children and on behalf of the children of anyone who asked her help. Ms. Chang was admitted to the university, and resumed the study of English she had begun in middle school; in 1978, she won a scholarship to Great Britain, where she received a doctorate in linguistics, and has lived there ever since.

Though the settings in Chang's book are exotic, the people aren't strange. Before the First World War, the list of ladylike accomplishments was the same in Manchuria as in Massachusetts, and the Chengdu street gang knew exactly what a street gang is supposed to do without ever having seen "West Side Story." The author's oldest brother, who became a physicist, was the same kind of child as my physicist brother. In traditional Asian patriarchal extended families, as in our own, a rich widower's grown children find ways to express their resentment at their father's remarriage; and many a Western mother has shared Yu-fang's dismay when, like De-hong, her daughter decides to marry without a traditional ceremony, feast, gown, and trousseau. The aspirations of the successive generations of women in this book parallel those of the same generations of Western women: Yu-fang, born in 1909, wanted to become a respected wife and mother; her daughter, born in 1931, hoped for a career but felt she ought to choose a nurturing profession and, since circumstances prevented her from studying medicine, turned her political job into social work; the author, born in 1952, took it for granted that women had jobs, and became a scholar.

It isn't that the Changs became "modern" and less Chinese. They're both. Dr. Xia practiced traditional Chinese medicine, but the family also used Western medicine. They didn't stop reading Chinese literature after they began reading Western books: they recognized trans- or supranational realities in the doings of Emma Bovary and Jo March, just as, reading Ms. Chang, we recognize small human crises (a first meeting between mother- and daughter-in-law) and small human pleasures (a family Sunday in the park). The author's own candor and sense of humor keep everything in proportion. She never whines, preaches, argues, or makes public-policy recommendations. She just tells stories. Of course, we feel how suffocating it is to live in a country where it isn't possible to tell a policeman or a soldier to go away or a bureaucrat to mind his own business, and we observe that the retrograde tyrannies in this book all find ways to belittle or exploit women.

Misgovernment and the oppression of women aren't the only—or even the main—themes. "Wild Swans" is a narrative exploration of one of humankind's few benign irrationalities—mother love. While Dr. Xia appreciated Shou-yu's nobility of character, Yu-fang objected to almost everything about her daughter's marriage; yet, though De-hong disappointed her, Yu-fang kept on loving her. De-hong took her mother's ineradicable devotion as her due, the way we used to take fresh air and clean water, and then duplicated her mother's devotion with her own children. As Ms. Chang follows her grandmother, her mother, and her brothers and sister through the decades, we see mother love's variety, nuance, and stubbornness—how it survives separation, coexists with disapproval or incomprehension, and evokes wholly unself-conscious self-sacrifice, even (or especially) on behalf of rebellious or defiant children.

Yu-fang died, her last illness undiagnosed and untreated, while her daughter was in prison during the Cultural Revolution; in her final hours, she hallucinated that she, like her daughter, had been the victim of a denunciation meeting. De-hong fared

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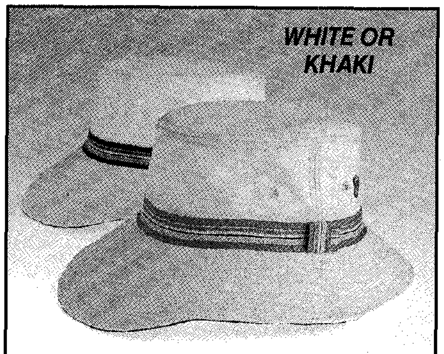

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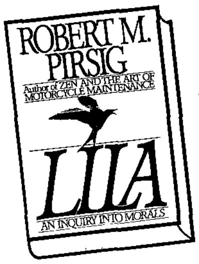

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better—she's retired on a pension—but all her children except her elder daughter now live in the West. Mother love doesn't reward mothers, but it empowers children. In Ms. Chang's family, it imparted the courage and good temper that distinguish her book and outlast regimes. —NAOMI BLIVEN

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

MURTHER & WALKING SPIRITS, by Robertson Davies (Viking; $21.95). "A cliché of human experience, but a novelty for me"—so the affable, intelligent ghost of Connor Gilmartin sums up his untimely demise, at the hands of his wife's lover. In life, Gil was the entertainment editor for a prominent Canadian paper, and in death his first task is to haunt an international film festival attended by the pretentious drama critic who killed him. But Gil doesn't see the esoteric flicks on the program; instead, a series about his ancestors is being presented, in another dimension, for his eyes only. As Welsh mountain men, loyalists fleeing the American Colonies, and fervid nineteenth-century Canadian church-builders cross the screen, the book becomes a historical tour de force and a showcase for the author's virtuosity—but it's almost too multipeopled for its own good. By the time Gil returns to the doings of his wife and her histrionic lover, it is unclear what the focus of this wide-ranging adventure is meant to be. Still, the assurance with which Mr. Davies conjures up the beyond is a pleasure: there is no hokey, supernatural gimmickry here, and Gil and his filmic forebears are an entertaining, solidly unghostly crew.

VIOLENCE, by Richard Bausch (Houghton Mifflin; $19.95). How well this author portrays the kind of covert but tense marital conflict in which every word spoken by one partner is misconstrued by the other or disowned by the speaker. The protagonist, Charles Connally, wants to deny the hatred he feels for his wife for being pregnant with their first child, and also his hatred for his mother for abandoning him to go off with a father he remembers as violent. Most of all, he wants to deny the violence he feels to be latent in himself. This becomes impossible after he survives a bloody shoot-out in an all-night convenience store and is declared, in the news media and by his family, a hero. For the reader, however, a little denial goes a long way. One wishes that Connally would finally confess to wife and mother, and release the reader into more fruitful areas of his life.

BIOGRAPHY, by Celia Gittelson (Knopf; $19). Raphael Alter is a dreamy, reclusive academic who is writing the official biography of Max Leibert, a Bronx-born, recently dead famous American poet. Alter is also the irresponsible landlord of a crumbling tenement on the Upper West Side, and, as he dashes furtively out of his apartment in pursuit of clues to the poet's life (unsent letters, unpaid liquor bills, poems written on diner placemats), he is waylaid by his aged tenants, who have complaints that he can't possibly afford to address. While Alter diligently sifts through the secrets of Leibert's bohemian past, the neglected aspects of his own existence threaten—quite literally—to bury him alive. Ms. Gittelson has written a love letter to New York City, a mystery, and a jokey examination of the perils of scholarship, but her novel is most delightful for its surprising marriage of style and substance: the drab corners of the biographer's life illuminated in the dazzle of the author's prose.

GENERAL

DREADNOUGHT: BRITAIN, GERMANY, AND THE COMING OF THE GREAT WAR, by Robert K. Massie (Random House; $35). This book is itself a dreadnought, a colossal history of Anglo-German naval rivalry before the First World War. Readers who have the time for total immersion in the period 1871-1914 will discover that Mr. Massie has produced a spectacular drama with an immense cast—all the personages in both countries whose policies shaped a hostility that was unnecessary yet inescapable. He explains the allure of technology, showing how innovation proved irresistible because it was possible. And there are fascinating stories—about, say, royal-family feuds—tucked into the larger epic, and plenty of food for thought, too. We recognize that it took the Second World War to change the outlook of Europeans: before the war, Europe's nations all expected to fight each other sooner or later, accepting war as part of European civilization.

The Devil’s Candy, by Julie Salamon (Houghton Mifflin; $24.95). A great story has found its meticulous teller in this book about the planning, filming, and disastrous release of Brian De Palma’s “Bonfire of the Vanities.” None of the cant that usually afflicts journalism about the business of moviemaking is present here; instead, Ms. Salamon conveys with energy and tenacity the characters and high emotions that shape the progress of a forty-million-dollar film-production juggernaut, and gives us one of the few panoptic accounts we have of a demanding and dangerously collaborative art. De Palma, to his credit, granted the author virtually complete access to the meetings, casting calls, rehearsals, telephone conferences, on-location encampments, and screenings that constitute the manufacture of a Hollywood movie, and she has recorded the trail of intervention (by studio executives, actors, accountants, and De Palma himself) that transformed the director’s original notion of a dark, essentially faithful adaptation of Tom Wolfe’s novel into a diluted and lifeless farce.

Bloody Dawn: The Christiana Riot and Racial Violence in the Antebellum North, by Thomas P. Slaughter (Oxford; $29.95). In 1851, a Maryland slaveholder named Edward Gorsuch formed a posse to capture four slaves who had fled his farm for Pennsylvania two years before. In free areas bordering the slave states, blacks—both escaped slaves and freedmen—were the prey of white gangs, who would kidnap them to be returned to their former masters or sold into slavery. African-Americans organized to confront this threat, and pitched battles between kidnappers and Northern blacks became frequent. Gorsuch and his allies provoked such a battle; he was killed, and the leaders of the black resistance escaped. In their absence, treason charges were levelled against thirty-eight men, both black and white; the whites were portrayed as the ringleaders, on the assumption that blacks were not capable of such resistance on their own. Mr. Slaughter relates this story deftly, sifting the evidence with an eye observant of telling details and alert to embedded prejudices. He then shows how the Christiana Riot exemplified attitudes toward race, class, and violence in the antebellum North, while it confirmed Southern suspicions that the North was ruled by radical abolitionists.

Whiteout: Lost in Aspen, by Ted Conover (Random House; $20). The author went to Aspen in order to write about it; he drove a cab for the Mellow Yellow Taxi Company, and later worked as a reporter on the local paper. A native Coloradan, Mr. Conover approached his subject with a degree of hostility: Aspen, an abandoned silver-mining town set in breathtakingly beautiful mountains, was reborn in the nineteen-forties as an artistic and intellectual community, but by the late eighties it had become a glitzy ski resort, where the cops patrolled in Saabs, condos rented for two thousand dollars a night, a saddle could cost a quarter of a million dollars, and Arab zillionaires competed to build the most lavish palace away from home. Mr. Conover was able to gate-crash some of the doings of the well heeled and well hyped—movie stars and other celebrities, developers, drug merchandisers, and “greedheads” of various stripes—and he can be devastatingly funny about them. Toward the end, just as he is expressing a certain ambivalence about the beauty, the laissez-faire sex, and the Aspen life style, one begins to feel satiated with the narcissism and vulgarity of the place, and closes the book with no regrets.

Note: “Odd Jobs,” a collection of pieces by John Updike, has been published by Knopf ($35). Much of the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker.*

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[*From the directory of a computer trade show in Las Vegas*]

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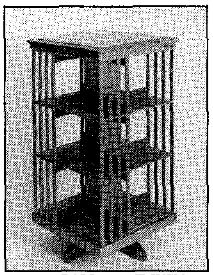
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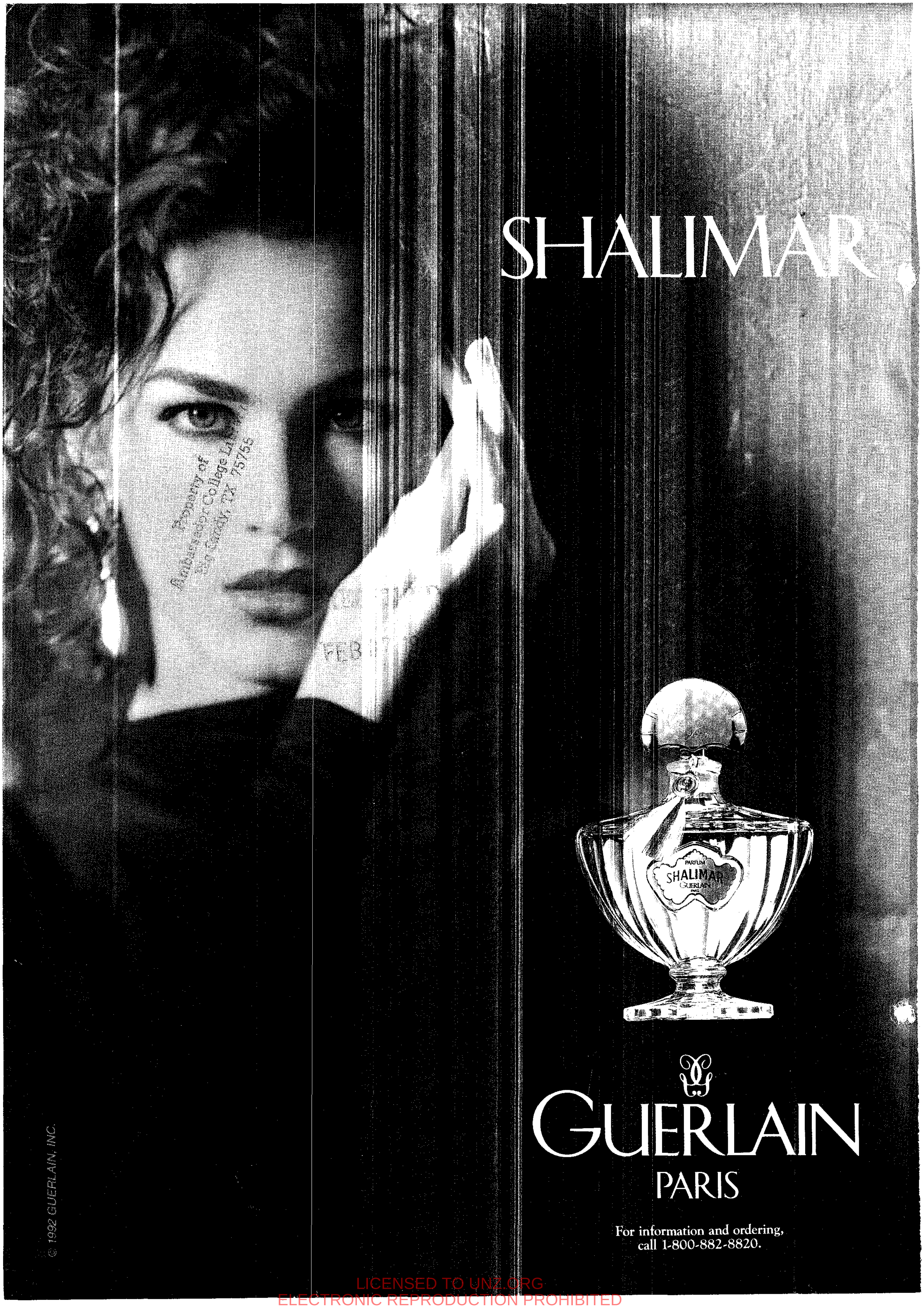

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